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Why Prince Charles must be King

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Save our suburbs from Legomaniacs

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FOR
CHILDREN
Weekend

THE TIMES

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50p

'Sign by summer' row hits Major at summit

BY PHILIP WEBSTER
AND GEORGE BROCK

BRITAIN last night came under concerted pressure from its EC partners to speed up ratification of the Maastricht treaty, as the Edinburgh Summit edged towards a deal that could enable Denmark to endorse the treaty by next summer.

Community officials were working through the night on a formula to help the Danish government win a second referendum, and Denmark's prime minister, Poul Schlüter, appeared confident of reaching agreement today. He predicted that the second vote would be out of the way by the end of the Danish presidency in June.

Other leaders seized on that pledge to urge Britain to follow suit. While Douglas Hurd denied that Britain's partners were imposing a firm ultimatum, the German spokesman Dieter Vogel said: "It is not just friendly banter when the government says it wants ratification in all member states to be completed by mid-year. I got the impression from this morning's discussion that Germany is not alone in saying that we could not wait for ever." The Ger-



Fingers crossed: can the summit solve the Danish question? John Major shows signs of hope as he welcomes Poul Schlüter to Holyroodhouse

circumstances give way to threats.

The new pressure on Britain came amid optimism that Denmark will emerge from the two-day summit with a deal enabling it to go forward confidently to a second referendum. Mr Schlüter said last night: "We shall have an agreement, and we shall have it now. It is important for Denmark, and it is important for the others too. We have gone through a bad time in the Community, and we now need to concentrate on solving other problems. It will be difficult, but I think we will eventually succeed. Because everybody knows that if we don't, the Maastricht treaty cannot be implemented."

Mr Schlüter had earlier surprised his colleagues by implying that there could be

no future for Denmark inside the EC if the people rejected Maastricht for a second time. "There is nobody who could really count on Denmark having a third referendum. There must be a limit."

The efforts to secure a Danish deal overshadowed yesterday's debate on the future financing of the Community, which remained deadlocked. Britain will table fresh proposals this morning in an attempt to appease Spain and other southern states who are threatening to block an overall agreement unless they receive more money through the community's cohesion fund.

Javier Solana, the Spanish foreign minister, said as the summit broke up last night that the gap between the rich and the poorer states was as

big as ever. "There is no agreement on any issues." The four poorer countries, Greece, Portugal, Spain, and Ireland, backed by Jacques Delors, argue that the latest British proposals to increase Community spending to £60.5 billion by 1999 were inadequate. But Mr Major was backed by Helmut Kohl of Germany, who told the summit that the figures being "bandied about" were "beyond what is possible."

The leaders did, however, agree a small package to boost the European economy. Officials are forecasting a £3 billion injection for investment in communications and transport projects — about a tenth of the European Commission's original proposal.

Summit reports, pages 8, 9

Britain's inflation lowest for six years

BY JANET BUSH
ECONOMICS CORRESPONDENT

BRITAIN'S headline inflation rate fell to the lowest level for six years in November, confirming that the recession is still forcing companies to hold down prices.

Norman Lamont, the Chancellor of the Exchequer, said yesterday's figures were "very welcome news". Nevertheless, he said he would remain resolute in the battle against inflation, suggesting that the figures do not give him more scope to cut interest rates.

The retail prices index rose only 3 per cent in November against 3.6 per cent in October, largely because of the effect of lower mortgage rates, according to the government's Central Statistical Office. The underlying rate, which excludes mortgage payments and is now targeted by the government, fell to 3.6 per cent from 3.8 per cent, the lowest annual rate since February, 1988. That decline reflected reduced prices across a broad range of goods and services.

The Opposition benches welcomed the fall in inflation but said it was hardly surprising with unemployment still increasing.

Full details, page 17

October figures	%
EC average	4.0
Germany (West)	3.7
United States	3.2
United Kingdom	3.0
France	2.4
Japan	1.1

* Figures for United Kingdom and Germany are for November

Briton is murdered in Nigeria ambush

BY JOHN YOUNG

A BT consultant on a sightseeing trip with a colleague in Nigeria has been murdered by gunmen. David Parsons, 44, and Peter Barrett, 45, were ambushed while being driven along a deserted dirt track about 30 miles north of the capital, Lagos.

The two men handed over their vehicle without a struggle but the attackers opened fire as they climbed aboard, killing Mr Parsons with a shot in the back of the head at point-blank range and wounding Mr Barrett and their Nigerian driver. Mr Barrett had to crawl to flag down a passing car to take him to Lagos after being hit in the leg and stomach.

Mr Parsons, one of a six-man team financed by the World Bank to install a new network for Nitel, the Nigerian telecommunications authority, had been in the country for a month. His death has prompted new fears about the safety of foreigners in Africa.

BT described the attack as "an absolutely appalling tragedy. There was no struggle, and no reason for them to be hurt, but they were apparently shot in cold blood."

Mr Barrett, married with two teenage children, of High Mickleby, Northumberland, was reported to be in a satisfactory condition in Newcastle General Hospital after being flown back to Britain on Wednesday. The body of Mr Parsons, from Gratham, Cambridgeshire, is expected to be flown home this weekend. His widow, Gloria, was being comforted by friends and relatives at her home.

Death toll, page 4

The royal clan gathers for banquet, if not for wedding

BY ALAN HAMILTON

MEMBERS of the royal family gathered on the royal yacht *Britannia* in Edinburgh last night on the eve of one of the strangest royal weddings in the annals of the House of Windsor. The Princess Royal marries Commander Timothy Laurence at Craithie Church near Balmoral today, but even by last night, their guest list remained one of the day's great uncertainties.

First, the bride's grandmother, Queen Elizabeth the Queen Mother, hesitated over making the journey — whether from moral reservations about a remarriage in her family, or from the hazards of braving a Scottish winter at the age of 92.

Then it was made known that the Princess of Wales would be bowing out, sending instead her best wishes. Yesterday rumour took wing that the Prince of Wales would also withdraw from his sister's nuptials, but his office said last night that it was "very unlikely that he would not attend."

The Duke of York, himself party to a legal separation from his wife, has pleaded a shooting engagement at Sandringham, leaving the Queen, the Duke of Edinburgh, the Queen Mother, Princess Margaret and Prince Edward as the only reasonably certain royal guests. Even the weather promises to be unkind.

The princess and Commander Laurence have expressed the somewhat hopeless wish that their wedding should be private. Large numbers of public and media representatives are expected at the scene, but police will hold them



Inside the church on wedding day

Details, Page 3

back in a large car park on the opposite side of the road, and rubber-neckers will have to make do with a brief glimpse of a cavalcade of cars making its way on the short stretch of road between the castle gates and the church.

On the night before the wedding, however, the troubled and divided family managed a show of unity when they hosted a banquet on board *Britannia* for the heads of government attending the Edinburgh summit.

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Europe's royal ratpack makes melodrama out of EC crisis

Edinburgh has the merit of being the first European Community summit to be attended by the royal ratpack, the first mass turnout of tabloids at an event usually only remotely intelligible to those who love the mysteries of the single market and intricacies of the common agricultural policy.

Cameras were not the only ones running in overdrive, for every television station in Europe had realised that Edinburgh lies not so far from Balmoral. What a chance to live up to tedious arguments about subsidiarity with a dose of royal melodrama. The wedding of the princess, the separation: it was all waiting to be relayed in glowing detail to Munich, Milan and Madrid.

"And 'ow am I meant to get to Balmoral from 'ere?' one despairing Italian asked. At least, however, *Britannia* was in the Forth, moored with material for delicious speculation on the Queen's banqueting arrangements. Would Charles and Di sit at the same table? Would they even walk up the same gangplank? Or would one be stationed at



Many of the hundreds of journalists who poured into Edinburgh for the EC summit had other things on their minds, writes Michael Binyon

the other forward? The EC leaders saw little of the circus — they were swept up in their black cars under a black sky into the black stone of the palace. Bagpipes played a welcome that sounded more like a black lament.

President Mitterrand, his story face enlivened with the hint of a smile at Elisabeth Guigou, his chic European affairs minister, was even wearing a long black raincoat. His mood at dinner with John Major the night before matched his attire.

The prime minister tried to liven things up with a joke. He recounted the history of Holyroodhouse (Signor Arato, the Italian prime minister, shuffled nervously when it came to the bit about Darnley and Rizzio. He told the summiters how the pal-

ace, founded in 1128 by King David I, was reputed to stand on the spot where the king, out hunting, was nearly gored by an enraged stag but at the last moment had seized a golden cross which miraculously appeared between the beast's horns. Actually, Mr Major added, the legend was stolen from an earlier one about St Hubert, an eighth-century bishop of a town the EC leaders all knew and loved — Maastricht.

Chancellor Kohl was said to have laughed so much that his whole frame shook — a frame made even larger by yet more indulgence in the pastry shops of Princes Street, where he rapidly put back on what ever he had lost during his last annual retreat to his health farm.

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State may lift pension age limit for women to 65

By Jill Sherman, Political Correspondent

WOMEN will not be able to draw a state pension until they are 65 under proposals being drawn up by the Department of Social Security.

The plans, which are expected to go to the Cabinet early next year before being published in a white paper, follow months of consultation on the equalisation of the state pension age.

Social security ministers are convinced that the best option is to raise the pension age for women by five years to bring it in line with that of men. Wary of a public backlash, however, they intend that any money saved should be kept by the department and targeted towards those on low incomes.

Ministers are said to have been impressed by proposals drawn up by the social security advisory committee last August which recommended equalising the pension age at 65.

The independent committee insisted that the £3 billion raised from the exercise should be used for income support premiums for those aged over 55 who were unemployed or chronically ill. They also recommended an increase in the carer's allowance from £32.55 (£33.70 from next April) to £54 a week.

Ministers considered a number of proposals for setting the retirement age equalising the age at 60.



Lilley: needs Cabinet decision on pensions

which would cost about £4.4 billion; fixing the age at 63, which would save about £800 million; or setting the age at 65, saving £3 billion.

A scheme to allow a flexible retirement age of between 60 and 70 has now been discounted, as it would be difficult to set a rate that would not unfairly penalise those retiring at the lower end of the scale without considerable expense.

Any move to change the pension age for women would be phased over ten to 15 years and would not affect those who are now in their mid to late 50s.

While equalising the state pension age at 65 is said to be favoured by the Treasury, social security ministers point out that there is considerable public support for reducing the retirement age for both sexes to 60.

Several Tory backbenchers argue that raising the age to 65 could initiate a public backlash at a time when the government can least afford it.

Social security ministers argue that the plans would be more palatable if dressed up with a package of higher benefits for poorer groups. This would be in line with moves by Peter Lilley, the social security secretary, to target benefits more effectively.

However, Mr Lilley, who secured one of the best settlements in the Autumn Statement, may find it difficult to persuade the Treasury to allow his department to pocket all the savings on pensions.

The future of pensions is to be the department's priority in the coming year. Until decisions are made about the state retirement age, Mr Lilley's hands are tied on changes in other benefits which would affect pensioners.

It is understood that he has considered closing the loophole that allows the long-term sick to continue claiming invalidity benefit for five years after the state retirement age instead of going on to the lower state pension immediately.

Pope says poverty is obstacle to peace

By Ruth Gledhill, Religion Correspondent

IN his strongest new year message in recent times, the Pope calls for measures to attack extreme poverty. He says people are living in conditions that are "an insult to their innate dignity". Pope John Paul II links the continuing conflicts throughout the world to grave poverty and destitution.

His message for World Peace day on New Year's day, published yesterday in Rome, is one of the most powerful he has written. Last year he called for Christians to join those of other faiths in praying for peace. The previous year, he urged religious freedom as a force for peace.

The message indicates clearly the Pope's dismay that local conflicts still engulf parts of the world although the spectre of a war between opposing ideological blocs is fading.

He refers in particular to Bosnia. "Nothing seems able to halt the senseless violence of arms: neither the joint efforts to promote an effective truce, nor the humanitarian activity of the international organisations, nor the chorus of appeals for peace which rise from the lands stained by the blood of battle."

He says: "Sadly, the aberrant logic of war is prevailing over the repeated and authoritative calls for peace." Continuing poverty and inequality were obstacles to peace, while the hunger and insecurity of millions were "a grave affront to human dignity and contribute to social instability", he said.

The Pope condemns the "prevailing criterion of profit" and says market forces are not enough to ensure just distribution of goods. In a consumer society it is "absolutely essential to stem the unrestrained consumption of earthly goods and to control the creation of artificial needs", he says. "Moderation and simplicity ought to become the criteria of our daily lives."



Dying breed: Brian Hill is the last fisherman to farm the Taw estuary for mussels

Pollution threatens mussels

BRIAN HILL, a north Devon fisherman, faces what may be his last winter scooping mussels from the bed of the Taw and Torridge estuary near his home in Fremington. His lifestyle is threatened by pollution levels in the estuary, which may fall foul of EC legislation on shellfish harvesting.

Mr Hill, who has farmed the estuary, near Barnstaple, for 38 years, is the last of what was once a number of mussel-farmers, including his father

and his grandfather before him.

"My family has been in north Devon for a long time. We are one of the oldest in the area and if I am driven from the estuary I don't stand much of a chance of doing anything else, not at 58," said Mr Hill.

Mr Hill collects the mussels in the age-old manner. Using rakes and baskets he takes them to his cottage home, where they are put into tanks of clean salt water to be purified using ultraviolet light.

"We have been running for 35 years and probably sell about 35 tons of mussels a year without problems. This could mean the end of an era for North Devon."

A recent preliminary classification from the department of health noted that the whole of the Taw and Torridge estuary was polluted to such an extent that it was "likely to fall within the classification whereby commercial shellfish harvesting is prohibited".

Anglers' right to dig lugworms is in peril

The Court of Appeal yesterday reserved judgment on the whether digging for bait on beaches is included in the public right to fish from the foreshore. However, Lord Justice Evans and Mr Justice Macpherson, hearing the case of a fisherman who was fined £50 by magistrates for digging up lugworms on a Northumberland beach, quashed his conviction, allowing his appeal on the ground that the map attached to the bylaw issued by Alnwick District Council was misleading.

Anthony Anderson, 46, of Seaton Sluice, Northumberland, had been accused of breaching, at Boulmer Haven, a bylaw made after the extensive digging of bait by striking miners during the 1983 pits dispute was considered a nuisance. David Wood, for Mr Anderson, invoked the Magna Carta in claiming that the ban infringed people's historic rights to deal with a temporary problem. Alun Alesbury, for the council, said: "The public right to fish in the sea is not disputed. But there is no right to dig." It was impossible to distinguish between an individual's right to dig and digging on a commercial scale, perhaps involving use of mechanical diggers, he said.

After the case, Mr Anderson said that the rights of six million fishermen to dig for lugworms was in the balance.

Kasparov sets record

Gary Kasparov, the Russian world chess champion, has bettered his previous all-time highest points score in heading the 1992 world chess ranking list issued yesterday by the World Chess Federation. Nigel Short, the leading British player, just misses the top ten in eleventh position on 2,655 points. The top rankings in order are: 1 Gary Kasparov (Russia) 2,805; 2 Anatoly Karpov (Russia) 2,725; 3 Vasily Ivanchuk (Ukraine) 2,710; 4 Viswanathan Anand (India) 2,710; 5 Boris Gelfand (Belarus) 2,690; 6 Vladimir Kramnik (Russia) 2,685; 7 Alexei Shirov (Latvia) 2,670; 8 Yevgeny Bareev (Russia) 2,670; 9 Kiril Georgiev (Bulgaria) 2,660 and Valery Salov (Russia) 2,660.

Smacking discharge

A Southampton woman who smacked her eight-year-old daughter's bottom with a slipper was found guilty of common assault by magistrates yesterday. The woman, 26, who cannot be identified, told the court her daughter was disciplined because she had lied about taking sweets. Magistrates, who gave the woman a conditional discharge, were told the girl was badly bruised and had previously been placed on a social services "at risk" register after suffering a broken arm and collar bone in a fall.

Gravy train halted

Thirteen thousand jars of Bisto Fuller Flavour Gravy Granules have been recalled after splinters of glass were found in two of them on Merseyside. The product's manufacturer, Ranks Hovis McDougall, said: "An immediate investigation has been launched. We believe that there was a breakage on the production line and some of the glass got lodged in the machinery when it was being cleaned up." The jars carry the batch number 2315 and a "best before" date of April 1994.

Police murder denied

A Belfast man appeared in his underwear at the Old Bailey yesterday to deny a charge of murdering Glenn Goodman, a special constable, in Yorkshire on June 7. Paul Magee, 42, also known as McHugh, and fellow Irishman Michael O'Brien, 28, who also pleaded not guilty to the murder charge, denied attempting to murder constables Alexander Kelly, Mark Whitehouse and Susan Larkin, and possessing a rifle with intent to endanger life. No explanation was offered for Mr Magee's state of undress.

Shell cuts prices by 18p

Shell is to cut the price on all grades of petrol by 18p a gallon (4p a litre), the company announced last night. The maximum price of Shell four-star will fall from 249.6p a gallon to 231.4p from midnight tomorrow. The move followed earlier cuts from BP and Esso and was made possible by falling prices on world markets and the stronger position of the pound against the dollar.

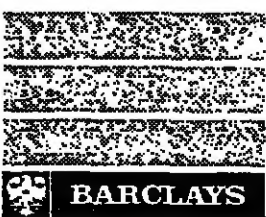
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Tests cast doubt on asthma discovery

By Nigel Hawkes, Science Editor

CLAIMS by British scientists to have identified the gene responsible for asthma have been thrown into doubt by the failure of four independent groups to repeat their results.

In March this year, an Oxford team led by Julian Hopkin and William Cookson said it had located the gene that caused allergic diseases such as asthma, hay fever and eczema, carried by a third of Britain's population. The discovery was hailed by the Wellcome Trust, which financed the work, as likely to lead to "designer" drugs that would alter an individual's susceptibility to allergic diseases.

The December issue of *Clinical and Experimental Allergy* carries four papers that undermine these claims. Teams from Sapporo in Japan, Minneapolis in America, Groningen in The Netherlands and London report failure to replicate the Oxford study. Professor Barry Kay of the National Heart and Lung Institute, a joint editor of the journal, says that it is now "highly unlikely that the claims of the Oxford scientists apply to all asthma".

The Oxford group looked at

blood samples from 1,000 people in 100 families with an inherited tendency to asthma. They concluded that the gene responsible for asthma and other allergies lay at a particular point on chromosome 11. A terminally ill patient with a brain tumour is undergoing gene therapy treatment at Johns Hopkins Hospital in Baltimore, Maryland. Millions of genetically engineered mouse cells were injected into the man's tumour. The cells have been modified so that they produce a retrovirus containing the herpes gene.

The retrovirus should enter the multiplying tumour cells, carrying the herpes gene. The tumour will then be treated by an anti-herpes drug, which should kill the tumour cells invaded by the gene.

CORRECTION

South Yorkshire Transport Ltd is suing four private bus operators over the use of route numbers, not, as incorrectly reported on December 7, South Yorkshire Passenger Transport Executive.

THE SUNDAY TIMES

The dream is over



For once the atmosphere was calm, almost cordial, as Charles and Diana frankly reviewed the wreckage of their lives together. It was during that long and civilised discussion in early June that the future king and queen of Britain bowed to the inevitable. They decided formally to separate and end the charade of togetherness. With the first hurdle — her confrontation with Charles — successfully overcome, Diana felt a deep inner peace. "She was," recalls a friend, "almost jolly..."

Andrew Morton, the author of *Diana: Her True Story*, on the royal separation — in *The Sunday Times*, tomorrow



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1350/1351

Unprecedented scenes of discreet crowds and low-key preparation mark royal wedding

Vow of silence and loyalty provides the perfect setting

By TOM RHODES

VILLAGERS in the Deeside hamlet of Crathie, where the Princess Royal will marry Commander Timothy Laurence today, were keeping a code of silence to rival that of the Mafia in the face of a media invasion.

Loyalty is virtually feudal in this small Scottish community, which has a strong tradition of refusing to talk to the press — a fact the royal family must welcome this weekend.

The several hundred journalists who have arrived here have been forced into an unnatural discretion; not by act of Parliament or public disaffection but by the local code of silence that has operated around Balmoral since Queen Victoria first chose the estate as her summer retreat.

The Rev Keith Angus, domestic chaplain to the Queen, will conduct today's service. He has consistently refused to comment on the ceremony and, although many of the local inhabitants, particularly those on the estate, are involved, they also have revealed nothing.

"We never talk about Her Majesty and I hope we never will," said one estate worker near the gates of Balmoral.

The church itself, which was built in 1854, has been closed to all but the inner sanctum since the marriage was announced last weekend. Even the single red telephone box opposite has been wired off from public use.

The inside of the building where today the Princess Royal will take her vows for the second time houses a royal place of worship segregated from the main aisle, and while the 30 fortunate members of the estate and their children invited to the service may hear the ceremony, it is unlikely that they will see it.

Even arrangements for the order of service and flowers have been kept secret, by strict instruction of the palace. But, as the phalanx of photographers — 500 are expected — positioned its ladders last night, a large Bentley containing only large bouquets slid past. The flowers were rumoured to be bound for

Craigrowen house, a home-stand on the estate where the princess is thought to have spent last night.

At the tiny primary school, the children are excited by the prospect of the first royal wedding at Crathie.

They have made a present of paper horseshoes each containing a pen portrait of themselves. This will accompany a congratulatory card of a hand-drawn battle ship, felt to most suitably reflect Commander Laurence's naval background.

"They have been delighted to have something like this to do, even though few of them are actually invited," said the head and only teacher, Patricia Birds.

"We are so busy with the nativity play here that I rather wish the royal family had granted the school a half day off from lessons."

The discreet but clearly sizeable police presence in Crathie has been maintaining 24-hour surveillance, which is expected to continue once the ceremony is over.

The police have, for more than three years, used a house near the church as an operational headquarters for their manoeuvres to ensure maximum privacy for visiting royalty.

Mike Lawson, spokesman for Grampian police force, would not reveal how many police would be patrolling the area this weekend. "The street will not be lined with police," he said. "I do feel that when the royal family is in Scotland they do not wish to open their curtains and find hundreds of police walking around."

Perhaps because he lives outside the community, in nearby Braemar, John Stammers, the local registrar, feels able to say a few carefully selected words. "She could have chosen the Castle of Mey or Holyroodhouse, but instead she chose Crathie. I think this is the most momentous thing that has happened to Deeside in the past 200 years."

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SIDE CRATHIE: WHO'S WHERE ON ROYAL WEDDING DAY



THE CHURCH
Plain granite walls, a pink slate roof. Foundation stone laid by Queen Victoria, 1883. Inside walls ornate. Pine pews seat up to 150

ROYAL GUESTS
The Queen and the Duke of Edinburgh lead the royal guests, who also include Zara and Peter Phillips, the Princess Royal's children from her first marriage

THE CEREMONY
The Princess Royal, Anne Elizabeth Alice Louise (aged 42) will marry Commander Timothy Anthony Hamilton Laurence (aged 37) in the standard Church of Scotland ceremony, presided over by the Rev Keith Angus, minister of the church

WEATHER
Dry but breezy, temperatures around 8C

GROOM'S FAMILY
Including his mother, Mrs Barbara Laurence and his brother and baby sister, Jonathan

OTHER GUESTS
Friends and neighbours of royal family, including racing driver Jackie Stewart, actor Anthony Andrews and members of the Scotland Rugby team

DRESS
Bride in a suit, groom in Royal Navy uniform with stiff white collar and sword. Male royals in Highland dress with kilts in Balmoral tartan



No pre-wedding nerves: It was business as usual for the Princess Royal yesterday

Royal wedding ring breaks long tradition

By KATE ALDERSON

BREAKING tradition, the Princess Royal's wedding and engagement rings have not been made by the crown jewellers, Garrard, but by Carol Darby, a little-known jeweller in Winchester.

All week the princess has been wearing gloves, but yesterday the gold ring inset with sapphires and diamonds was glimpsed when she was in Scotland.

Mrs Darby, 46, a friend of Commander Timothy Laurence, was approached during the summer to make the wedding and engagement rings. Commander Laurence told her that the rings had to be designed in secret, and insisted on visiting her shop when there were no other customers present.

The wedding ring has not been made from Welsh gold, unlike those of the Queen, Queen Elizabeth the Queen Mother, the Princess of Wales and the Duchess of York.

Mrs Darby said her designs for the princess's rings took into account that she was a working woman, does not wear much jewellery, wears classic clothes, but is a princess.

"The design was left up to me," said Mrs Darby. "I submitted some initial designs and then some final designs, and they made their decision together."

The right stone was difficult to find, Mrs Darby said, but the final product was "the perfect ring". She described it as unusual and feminine.

"In the end I had the stone specially cut. The ring is unusual and probably not what people expect. It took several weeks to sort out the design, with which they are very happy."

Commander Laurence will also wear a wedding ring made by Mrs Darby. She would not comment on the rings' cost.

National networks banned at service

By JULIA LLEWELLYN SMITH

TELEVISION coverage of today's ceremony will be a far cry from the spectacular event of 1973, when the princess's wedding to Captain Mark Phillips enthralled millions of viewers throughout the world.

In Britain, 25 million people tuned in to what was the first live broadcast of a royal wedding. The worldwide television audience was 550 million.

Today, only extracts of the ceremony will be shown on television. A BBC spokesman said yesterday: "It's a fairly low-key affair and the Charles and Diana business has overshadowed the whole thing."

The only television crew to be allowed into the church is that of Peter Edwards, of Bonham Carter Associates, the firm that films the Queen's Christmas broadcasts and which made the documentary *Elizabeth R*.

Many foreign television companies will buy footage rather than send their own crews to Scotland. In spite of intense American interest in the trials of the royal family, the cable news network CNN appeared to be unaware of the wedding. "We have no plans," a spokeswoman said. "Is it tomorrow?"

Mr Edwards, who has filmed most important royal programmes since 1969, angered BBC, ITN and Sky News after announcing that he planned to charge £4,500 for footage of the wedding. Yesterday he changed his mind, saying that he could rely on international sales.

"The broadcasters will get much better footage from us, mingling among the guests, than they could get themselves," he said. "The idea that a bunch of armoured-jacketed cameramen would be allowed to wander about is not realistic."

Newspapers will have to pay for royal wedding photographs for the first time. They will be charged £750 for a set of four pictures.

The wedding banns posted at Balmoral near Balmoral mistakenly named the princess's fiancé as Timothy Anthony Hamilton Laurence. Commander Laurence's correct name is James.

The registrar general's office said that it was a clerical error, adding: "This does not affect the legality of the forthcoming marriage."

£4.4m puts Rubens in the shade

By SARAH JANE CHECKLAND
ART MARKET CORRESPONDENT

A COURTYARD scene by Pieter de Hooch sold for £4.4 million at Christie's in London yesterday, far exceeding the previous record of £350,000 for a work by the 17th century Dutch artist. The successful bidder was from the Noortman Gallery, in London.

The *Courtyard of a House in Delft*, which has hung for many years at Wrotham Park, Hertfordshire, is unlikely to be blocked for export because of its similarity with a de Hooch at the National Gallery.

Less successful was *Madame de Vieux by Rubens*, for which bids stopped short of the £1.5 million estimate. Following quick negotiations the painting was sold anonymously for £990,000.

Prince defends spending on the arts

By ALISON ROBERTS, ARTS REPORTER

THE Prince of Wales yesterday spoke up for an artistic community under financial pressure. Both government and business sponsors must safeguard "a prosperous culture", which is needed "just as much, if not more, than a culture of prosperity", he said.

Speaking at the award-giving ceremony for the Arts and Business Sponsorship Association (Absa), co-sponsored by *The Times*, the prince appeared relaxed and in a humorous mood. As he stood on the revolving stage, built for the musical *Carousel* at the National Theatre in London, he expressed a wish to revolve with it and come back later. A glance at the audience, who supported his entrance with prolonged applause, made his meaning clear.

The prince said the arts were not "an optional extra, to support when times are good. If we do not act now to protect the cultural life of our country, we shall impoverish future

generations. I have heard people sometimes describe the cuts in investment they have made during a recession as a 'necessary evil'. Necessary perhaps, and also — in the field of arts, where long-term effects may extend down the generations — surely something we must avoid as an evil," he said.

Parts of the speech, which was rewritten after the announcement of the royal separation on Wednesday, gained poignancy from recent events. "Talking about funding for anything these days is a very risky business. I think one has to follow Cocteau's advice that 'act consists in knowing how far to go in going too far,'" he said.

Leading figures in the arts and business world, including Lord Sainsbury, and Richard Eyre, director of the National Theatre, were at the ceremony hosted by Diana Rigg, the actress. Awards were made to businesses that had supported arts events over the past year.

Prince Charles said: "In these darkening days of recession, I believe that we should not be building on the sands of fluctuating subsidies, but on the rock-hard conviction that funding of the arts must be done for its own sake."

He urged that arts be put "far enough up the agenda to prevent them from being swept away in the flood tide of budget-cutting".

Business sponsorship of the arts increased in 1991, despite the recession. However, Sir Simon Hornby, chairman of Absa, said that sponsorship money was proving more difficult to attract.

Absa award-winners were: Art and disabled people, Yorkshire Electricity Group; Art and urban regeneration, North of England Building Society; British art overseas, Cable & Wireless; Commission of new art in any medium, KMPG Management Consulting; Corporate programme, Mobil Oil; First-time sponsor, Champagne Piper-Heidsieck; Long-term commitment, Sainsbury; Youth sponsorship, WH Smith; The BP arts award, North of England Museums Service; Artline Andersen award for the business in the arts adviser of 1992, Andrew Hadjiofi.



Prince Charles: arts are "not optional extra"

Scargill's wife leads pit sit-in

By PAUL WILKINSON

ANN Scargill, wife of the NUM president, led a sit-in protest yesterday at Marillium Main colliery, South Yorkshire, one of the ten mines selected for instant closure under British Coal's original review of the industry.

Mrs Scargill, with four members of the Yorkshire branch of the Women Against Pit Closures Campaign, slipped past staff to occupy the pit's control room and telephone exchange in the main block. Managers persuaded them to move to the pit's conference room, but made no eviction attempt.

When told of his wife's action, Arthur Scargill was visibly shaken.

Windsor clan gathers for summit banquet

Continued from page 1

it. Even the Prince and Princess of Wales were together in the same dining room, although they arrived separately at the airport from their day's separate programmes and were kept apart at dinner.

Much might be read into the seating plan. The princess was at the top table with only President Mitterrand between her and the Queen, the foreign minister of Spain on her right and Jacques Delors, president of the European Commission, directly opposite her. Besides the Duke of Edinburgh and Princess Margaret, other luminaries on the top table included the prime ministers of Belgium, The Netherlands and Luxembourg, the Lord Provost of Edinburgh and the Moderator of the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland.

At a second table in *Britannia's* elegant state dining room, the Prince of Wales sat

opposite Helmut Kohl, the German chancellor, and the prime minister of Spain, with John Major directly opposite him. At the third table, the Princess Royal was flanked by the prime ministers of Greece and Ireland, with Ian Lang, secretary of state for Scotland, for company directly across the sea of Minton china and Royal Brierley crystal.

The guests were served a terrine of Scottish salmon, followed by partridge and *foie gras* in cognac. The wines were unquestionably French: a 1985 Chablis Grand Cru Vaudesir, a 1981 Chateau Talbot, and a 1983 Bollinger champagne. The Cockburn's port, however, is the product of an old established Edinburgh wine shipper.

Commander Laurence, meanwhile, spent his last night of bachelorhood at an unknown location, presumably sustained on somewhat simpler fare.

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COMMUNICATIONS

Scientists doubt reliability of test

Judge rejects DNA data in robbery case

By Stewart Tandler and Nigel Hawkes

SCOTLAND Yard is hosting an international conference to find new standards for DNA testing amid growing legal debate over the tests after a second Old Bailey case ended yesterday with genetic evidence being thrown out.

Last month, Alan Borham had DNA evidence disregarded because the judge accepted there was doubt among scientists about the statistical basis for matching one DNA profile to two people. Borham was later convicted of sexual assault on other evidence.

But this week charges against Terence Hammond, accused of armed robbery, were dropped after a six-day hearing without the jury before Mr Recorder Alan Rawley QC. The judge accepted evidence on the statistical question and also doubts raised over the standards for making positive identification and matches in what is said to be the first wholesale rejection of DNA evidence by a British court. The Crown Prosecution

Service said yesterday that it was aware of the cases but there would be no embargo on the use of DNA evidence.

Last night, Scotland Yard issued a long statement on behalf of its forensic science laboratory, defending the use of DNA and claiming that objections to present practice came from a minority of scientists. The Yard said there was no question of DNA evidence being held back. The system was a powerful form of identification which cleared the innocent as well as convicting the guilty.

The statement said statistical evaluations were correct and safe. But next month the Yard's forensic scientists will host an international conference of scientists and police officers who will debate the key statistical basis of DNA evidence offered in courts. They will seek a formula acceptable throughout the scientific community so that an expert witness can offer a jury an accurate estimate of the

probabilities of someone else apart from the defendant having the same DNA profile.

In the Hammond case, Robin Simpson QC and Mark Graffius, for Mr Hammond, argued there were doubts about the DNA match. They showed the Yard used one standard for positive identification while the rest of the country used another. Tom Fedor, their own scientist, drew a third conclusion about the results, which opened doubt.

The counsel then argued over the data base used to say how likely the DNA profile could be repeated. They said the data base could be too small or too tightly drawn to allow any accurate assessment to be made.

Mr Fedor said after the case that some American courts now rejected DNA evidence. "What we are saying is, 'Unless you have proper guidelines and statistical procedures, DNA evidence is unreliable.'"



Fatal fall: Sharon Webb plunged 125ft

Briton falls from Table Mountain

By John Young

A BRITISH tourist has plunged 125ft to her death while walking on Table Mountain, above Cape Town, South Africa. The body of Sharon Webb, 34, of Cumberworth, Lincolnshire, was found on Thursday night after her friend, Maureen Tyrrell, reported that she had failed to return from a climb on Wednesday.

Miss Webb is thought to have chosen a dangerous route down the mountain, which took her too close to the Blinkwater ravine. Police have ruled out foul play. The two women had been on holiday in South Africa for about three weeks.

A couple who emigrated to Jamaica to start a new life have been found brutally murdered in their home. Josie Clarke, 72, a former electrical engineer, had been tied up and stabbed more than 40 times. His wife Margaret, 55, a former nurse, had been strangled. Two men have been arrested.

Briton murdered, page 1

Arts Council loses £14m of funding to regional boards

By Alison Roberts, Arts Reporter

THE Arts Council is to lose responsibility for funding more than 40 arts organisations.

The council, undergoing the largest restructuring programme since it began, will retain responsibility for touring groups and for no more than 25 arts organisations of national status.

All other clients will be transferred to the new Regional Arts Boards. The Royal Opera House and South Bank Centre, the Arts Council's first and second largest clients, will continue to be funded from the council's budget. Other survivors include all the national orchestras, the Royal Shakespeare Company and the National Theatre.

The announcement yesterday will be seen as a fudged compromise of proposals to devolve all funding responsibility, made by Richard Luce, arts minister in 1988.

Peter Brooke, national heritage secretary, said yesterday that the delegation of responsibility would be postponed until April 1994, when a further evaluation of the Arts Council's role would be complete. The Arts Council will lose a total of £14 million in grants to the regional boards.

The council will retain responsibility for those companies whose budgets cannot be compared with those of similar organisations. Mr Brooke said. The regional

boards can compare several of the smaller organisations in their area and decide what proportion of their grant-in-aid to hand out.

Mr Brooke said: "Decisions should be taken as close as possible to those affected by them, within an overall policy framework. The Arts Council will continue to have a central role in providing that framework and in managing the funding system."

Although the Arts Council welcomed the announcement, many of the smaller theatres believe that it will lead to a two-tier funding system. William Weston, executive director of the West Yorks Playhouse, said that it would create a further inequality in funding between national institutions in London and equally productive companies in the regions. Pressure on regional boards was likely to grow as local authority finances were squeezed.

Arts organisations expressed further fears that the council's funding administration will rise as staff are duplicated in each region.

Mr Brooke admitted that the balance between regional and central funding was a complex issue and that the new structure would be given a test run. The secretary of state also said he was commissioning consultants to examine the bureaucratic structure of the Arts Council.

Schools to provide new career boost

By John O'Leary, Education Correspondent

SCHOOLS will have to provide achievement records for all pupils when they leave from next month, John Patten, the education secretary, announced yesterday.

As well as GCSE and A-level results, the record will list vocational qualifications and non-academic successes in fields such as music or sport. Mr Patten described the National Record of Achievement as a "passport to working life" and said it would also serve as a supporting document for applications to further or higher education.

"It will be a document they can be proud of and use to promote themselves. Nor does the NRA stop there. It is a lifetime document, which the holder can regularly update and use to plan career development and training."

Many schools have been voluntarily issuing achievement records since last year. They will now also be required to pass on information to other schools when pupils transfer. This will include national curriculum assessments and reports of progress in the main subjects.

Teenager jailed for death

By Tim Jones

A TEENAGER who killed a grandfather as a crowd of drunken youths rampaged through a quiet country village was yesterday jailed for two and a half years.

Phillip Hill, 18, of Gosport, Hampshire, who admitted the manslaughter of John Taylor, 48, will serve time in a young offenders' institute. Seven other youths, all from Gosport, who pleaded guilty to violent disorder, were sentenced to nine months.

Nigel Myne QC, prosecuting, told Winchester Crown Court that Mr Taylor and Robert Allan, his son-in-law, had left a family barbecue to remonstrate with the youths outside Mr Taylor's home in Alverstoke, Hampshire. In the road, Hill threw a single punch at Mr Taylor, who was trying to stop the gang smashing up his garden. He fell back, was knocked unconscious, and died hours later. Although Hill walked away, the rest of the group attacked Mr Allan with kicks and blows. He was detained in hospital for three days. Mr Myne said the eight teenagers had been drinking heavily.

Top companies asked to help Times appeal

By Ruth Gledhill

THE editor of *The Times*, Peter Stothard, has appealed to *The Times* top 1,000 companies to help 1st AID reach its £1 million fundraising target on January 1.

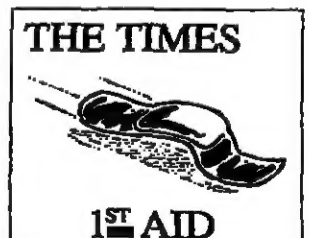
1st AID is aiming to raise funds to save lives in the immediate aftermath of a disaster. The appeal is co-ordinated by the World Memorial Fund for Disaster Relief, an international charity set up by the late Lord Cheshire with the backing of the United Nations.

In a letter to the companies, Mr Stothard says that natural and man-made disasters are inevitable, and 1st AID aims to plan for those that will happen next year.

He says funds will be available within hours for whichever charities are best able to get the right relief to where it is most needed. The January 1 issue of *The Times* will name all the top 1,000 companies that have contributed.

1st AID is financing its first rescue mission next week, a consignment of baby food to help save the lives of children in Bosnia. The food is being delivered to refugee camps near Vitez and Travnik by the relief organisation Feed the Children, and is intended to arrive before Christmas.

The idea for 1st AID came from a donation to the World Memorial Fund for Disaster Relief on January 1 this year. It was accompanied by a note that said: "It is appropriate that my first financial trans-



action of the new year should be for others rather than for myself."

The long-term aim of the appeal is to supply immediate relief for the victims of disasters by collecting money in advance. This will mean that medical teams and supplies can be sent without delay. The appeal is backed by Baroness Ryder of Warsaw, founder of the Sue Ryder Foundation for the Sick and Disabled and Lord Cheshire's widow.

The Charities Aid Foundation (CAF) will be responsible for all banking and donation aspects of 1st AID. The money will be transferred immediately to eligible charities, which will include only those concerned with international relief aid, or it will be held by CAF in a high-interest account until needed.

Donations can be made by phoning the credit card hotline on 0272-226688 (24 hours); cheque/postal order payable to 1st AID and sent to 1st AID Appeal, c/o CAF, Freepost TN 2257, Tunbridge Wells, Kent TN2 5BR; or over the counter at any Bradford & Bingley Building Society or Midland Bank.

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Discounts will cost InterCity £1m

Only 20,000 regular rail users to get rebate

BY IAN MURRAY

FEWER than 20,000 British Rail season ticket holders on just 11 of the country's 46 routes will qualify for incremental cuts in travel prices from the start of next year. They are the only ones whose regular services failed to meet targets of the new passenger code for punctuality or reliability set up under the passenger's charter.

Yesterday, the three separate British Rail systems all confessed their timetable failures since the start of the year. They showed that Network SouthEast's Kent Coast line was easily the least punctual service, with almost one train in four arriving at least five minutes late. In contrast, in Cumbria only 2.8 per cent of trains failed to keep to the timetable.

Passengers with season tickets on the 11 lines will be eligible for a 5 per cent reduction in the price of tickets from January 3. About 10,000 season ticket holders with InterCity are likely to

British Rail commuters will reap little reward from the passenger's charter. Most services were judged reliable and on time

qualify, at an estimated cost of about £1 million. Network SouthEast will offer discounts to about 5,000 London commuters on the Kent Coast line. The remaining passengers have tickets on the long-distance regional services, where two out of 13 routes ran late.

Spokesmen for the three different systems said yesterday that they could not expect significant improvements without more money to improve infrastructure.

InterCity, where five routes out of seven failed to meet their targets, attributed its problems to low or non-existent investment to replace 30-year-old rolling stock. Network SouthEast blamed disruption caused by building the Channel link.

Robert Adley, Conservative chairman of the Commons transport committee, said: "Unless and until sufficient investment funds are available to BR it will remain virtually impossible for punctuality targets to be met in the face of inevitable speed restrictions caused by a backlog of repairs."

Most problems occurred on the cross-country routes linking Liverpool with Norwich.

INTERCITY

Route	Target (%)	Actual (%)
Gatwick Express	90	96.8
East Coast	90	88.4
Great Western	90	88.4
Midland Mainline	90	87.9
Anglia	90	86.2
West Coast	90	83.4
Cross-country	90	81.8

Only a failure to meet punctuality targets by more than 3 per cent triggers the 5 per cent discount on season tickets



Clockwise: passengers from Glasgow alight at Edinburgh. Most InterCity routes failed to meet timetable targets

Violence growing say UK Hindus

BY NICHOLAS WATT

ASIAN leaders in Britain confirmed last night that communal violence was escalating after two petrol bombs were thrown at the Krishna Hindu temple in Bolton during prayers. One scorched a side door and the other bounced off it before igniting against a wall. The attack was the second in Bolton this week and the sixteenth on an Asian place of worship in Britain.

Kishor Ruparelia, of the Vishwa Hindu Parishad, said the attack on worshippers was a worrying escalation of the violence. "We are very apprehensive about what might happen this weekend," he said.

The attack in Bolton was the first time that people were attacked at prayer. Things are getting more dangerous. Some Muslims met in Bradford on Thursday and distributed some very nasty leaflets calling for a jihad against Hindus in Britain."

As the temple was fire-bombed, Hindu and Muslim leaders met Kenneth Clarke, the home secretary, and Peter Lloyd, a junior minister, to discuss the week's violence.

Credo

Subsidiarity is best seen from the bottom up

Dr John Habgood

Theologians may be forgiven for enjoying the spectacle of politicians trying to make practical sense of an obscure theological concept which is somehow felt to hold the key to the structuring of the European Community. Subsidiarity has had good press coverage, but a poor performance record. It works better if it is used the right way up.

The most common mistake is to regard it as a fancy word for delegation, devolution or power-sharing. The assumption behind this is that power is concentrated at the top and graciously distributed to those at the bottom. In fact, subsidiarity is a bottom-up concept, not a top-down one. It entails the recognition that power and responsibility properly belong to those who are most directly affected by their exercise, and that higher levels of social organisation exist to help in the just fulfilment of those responsibilities.

The word itself means "help". It is about those powers and structures which are subsidiary to, and supportive of, those who fulfil their tasks at a more personal and local level. Higher authorities should only override the fulfilment of these tasks reluctantly and as a last resort in the interests of some more widespread common good.

Interpreted thus baldly, subsidiarity may seem to signal a return to the individualism of the 1980s. Minimum government and maximum consumer choice at first sight represent precisely this inversion of power structures to which the concept points. But it is not as simple as that. In its original context in German Roman Catholic social metaphysics it forms part of a trilogy of principles which balance one another.

The principle of individual human rights is qualified by that of the common good of a community within which alone those rights can be guaranteed. Bridging them is the principle of subsidiarity, which stresses the responsibility of individuals for their own well-being within a social context in which that responsibility is affirmed and supported, but not in such a way as to trespass on the rights of others.

It is not, therefore, a recipe for individualism. Rather, it is a reminder of the subtle balance between personal responsibility to oneself and others, and the social conditions which make the exercise of that responsibility possible. The pressure it exerts on higher authorities is to make them ask whether the powers

they seek legitimately belong to them, and whether these powers will increase or diminish the capacity for responsible decision-making at lower levels. Policies towards local government are a case in point. It seems very odd to emphasise subsidiarity at European Community level, while greatly increasing the centralising powers of government at national level. If it is argued that local government has not in practice been responsive to local needs, then the answer can hardly lie in distancing the major decision-making powers even further from the people affected by them.

The so-called level playing field for the European single market is another example. This has been a top-down exercise of the most blatant kind. Millions of local initiatives and variations have been subjected to deeply resented EC regulations to meet the conditions of a bureaucratic ideal.

The ideal may have been a worthy one, in that responsible choice demands a certain fairness and consistency, but not surely at the gratuitous cost of suppressing local diversity. The extremes to which the ideal has been taken rightly arouse the deepest suspicions about what might happen at the political level through closer union.

The application of the subsidiarity principle in tackling the world's increasingly intractable problems about minorities has relevance for our own internal arguments about sovereignty. The choice for minorities is often presented as if it were between autonomy and subservience. But if local responsibility is primary, and if the task of national governments and supranational bodies is to safeguard these primary responsibilities, create conditions for their flourishing, and to exercise those powers which belong to their own wider contexts, then the choice between autonomy and subservience can seem less stark. Autonomy, like sovereignty, is not an absolute. It exists within a framework of rights and responsibilities which are defined in part by others. And those others themselves have rights and responsibilities appropriate to their own wider context.

Subsidiarity is not an easy concept. But it is a fruitful one. Politicians may have a good deal to learn from theology, whether they recognise it or not. The author is the Archbishop of York

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To protect the identity of the child a model was used



More jets to be packed into Atlantic airspace

By HARVEY ELLIOTT, AIR CORRESPONDENT

The International Civil Aviation Organisation, worried

The British Airline Pilots' Association (Balpa) said yesterday that it would be studying the trials "extremely closely". Pilots are still concerned that, although inertial navigation equipment on

No moves have yet been made to change the separation minima between aircraft once they have reached air traffic control areas near their destination, nor to increase the number of runways on which

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interval

Today's safe
distance:
60 miles

Proposed
5 minute
interval

Minimum
vertical
separation:
2,000 ft

Proposed distance:
30 miles

may be caused by aircraft flying too closely together and inaccurate altimeters, all the benefits could be overtaken if they have to stack for ages waiting to land."

100 smuggled parrots return to Colombian wilds

BY MICHAEL HORNSEY
AGRICULTURE CORRESPONDENT

That plea is backed by the National Council for Aviculture, representing caged-bird enthusiasts, and the Parrot Society, to which 5,000 parrot breeders and owners belong. They say captive-bred birds make better pets. The attraction of brightly coloured imports is that they are cheaper and more readily available.

David Coombes, secretary of the Parrot Society, said: "The African grey, which comes from West Africa, is one of the most popular parrots because it learns to talk easily. The best kind is hand-reared from birth and will cost £500 or more, against about £220 for a wild import. An English-bred Senegal parrot, which is also popular, will cost about £100, twice as much as an import. There is a

Trade in the rarest species is banned or restricted under the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora. But the anti-trade campaigners say these controls can be bypassed by hiding rare species among legally tradeable birds, forging export permits and under-declaring their consignments.

They say many countries issuing export licences have inadequate data on the size of their bird populations. So far, the government has resisted a total ban, favouring instead tightened transport and import rules.



Senegal parrot: many birds die en route

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RENAULT CLIO

Ayrshire risks losing rare art collection

By JOHN YOUNG

Dr Eckstrand said yesterday: "I agreed last May to sell to the Penkfil Trust for £1 million. When the property market collapsed, we adjusted the figure to £650,000. When the National Trust became involved, I said I would accept £350,000 now and the balance next year. On Tuesday the dissection begins. It is a loss not only to me but to the nation."

NEWS IN BRIEF

**Abortion
case man
to be tried**

Clueless thief

Michael Stewart, 32, of Forest Road, East London, was convicted of robbery and fraud.

Return fails

Bail granted

Michael Brookes, 47, was granted bail by Nottingham Crown Court yesterday, accused of murdering Lynn Sidons, 16, in Barrow upon Trent, Derbyshire, in 1978.

Hoaxer hunted

A boy aged eight thought to be responsible for half the hoax calls made in Grimsby is being hunted by police and fire officers on Humberside.

[illegible]

Countdown to Christmas

Selfridge's joins the rush to win Sunday shoppers

By ROBIN YOUNG

THE London department store Selfridge's will join the Sunday opening movement for the first time in its 80-year history tomorrow as competition among the big shops for last-minute Christmas shoppers intensifies.

The Shopping Hours Reform Council says that stores that do not open on the remaining two Sundays will be the exception to the rule.

The move by Selfridge's to open its Oxford Street store, in defiance of the discredited Sunday trading laws, follows the decision two weeks ago by House of Fraser to open most of its stores throughout the country, with the notable exception of Harrods. Bob Ager, Selfridge's marketing director, said there were two contributory factors to the decision: customer demand and the recession.

"There has been a marked change in shopping habits," Mr Ager said. "Each year people are leaving Christmas shopping later and later, and

with the effects of the recession we are obliged to grasp every opportunity available for maximising our sales."

The opponents of Sunday trading have not abandoned hope, though. On Thursday Ray Powell, Labour MP for Ogmore, published his private member's bill designed to restrict Sunday trading to premises with no more than 1,500 square feet of shop space. Mr Powell, an established parliamentary advocate of tighter restrictions, is sponsored by the shopworkers' trade union Usdaw. He has adopted proposals put forward by the Keep Sunday Special campaign and was drawn third in the ballot for private members' bills in the present session.

His bill, the twenty-fifth attempt to reform Britain's anomalous Shops Act since its passage in 1950, will be debated on its second reading in the Commons next month, but probably stands no better chance of success than any of

its predecessors. Whether sponsored by governments or private members, all have uniformly foundered on parliamentary disagreement as to what the law should be.

Next week, the European Court of Justice in Luxembourg is due to do its bit toward clarifying not what the law should be, but what it already is. The court will deliver its directions on Wednesday to the House of Lords regarding the validity of the Sunday trading laws in England and Wales, having been asked, for the second time in three years, to guide UK courts on a potential incompatibility between the Shops Act 1950 and Article 30 of the Treaty of Rome, which prohibits barriers to trade between EC countries.

The European Court's ruling will be returned to the House of Lords for final judgment, and, perhaps, for further litigation.

□ The Royal Mail believes that postmen will be carrying

more Christmas cards than ever this year. Peter Howarth, the Royal Mail managing director, said yesterday that more than 1.6 billion items will drop through the nation's letterboxes during the festive season.

Despite the recession, Royal Mail is confident that this year's Christmas post will set a record.

Recommended last posting dates are December 18 for second class mail and December 21 for first class, but Mr Howarth predicted that Monday will be the peak day for posting. After this weekend's efforts to send Christmas cards, it is expected that Monday's collections will be almost double the norm — 114 million items compared with an average of 61 million.

Weekend section:

One-stop wine shop

page 4

Shopping, page 9

Essential etiquette and

Christmas breaks, page 10



First voice: Anthony Hopkins rehearses for the world premiere of *An Evening with Dylan Thomas* next week, to be filmed for later broadcast on television at Lyndhurst Hall in Hampstead, north London

Scientists root out the perfect tree

By NICK NUTTALL, TECHNOLOGY CORRESPONDENT

BRITISH scientists are well on their way to growing the perfect Christmas tree, which, they hope, will be bushy and pyramid-shaped, with the ideal number of branches to support not just a battery of lights but also pounds of tinsel, chocolates and decorations.

The research, conducted by agriculture ministry scientists, has been in progress for nearly two years at Yattendon Estates, near Newbury, Berkshire. England's biggest Christmas tree growing site.

While Christmas tree growers try to limit fast, straggly growth and promote buds from which branches grow by pruning or shearing, the scientists are using cocktails of special growth-regulating chemicals on about 500 test trees. Traditional and novel preparations of chemicals and plant hormones are being used at different stages of the growing season to enhance performance.

Major-General Tony Richardson, secretary of the British Christmas Tree Growers' Association, said: "We think we have found the answer but we are being a bit careful about releasing results. The Danes would clearly love to know what we are doing and so would the Irish."

The research highlights a worldwide desire to develop better, "perfect" Christmas

trees with lots of elegantly arranged branches, fragrant, softer and longer-lasting needles and richer blue-green tints.

More than five million are expected to be sold in Britain over the Christmas period, with prices ranging from about £2 a foot for a Norway spruce to about £4 a foot for a Nordmann fir.

British growers regularly travel to Scandinavia, Turkey and the Russian Caucasus in search of promising seeds. Research is also being carried out into the best balance of trace elements and soil types able to promote better-shaped plants. In America researchers at Pennsylvania State University have crossed top-quality specimens of Scots pines to breed a tree called Penn Spanish.

Bill Proebsting, a horticulturalist at Oregon State University, is testing micropropagation techniques to clone "best" members of genetically identical and superior Douglas firs. The method involves using plant hormones to force cut branches to grow roots.

Similar research is being conducted in Britain but scientists believe the technique is still some way from being commercialised: it requires large numbers of greenhouses and staff and very sophisticated equipment.

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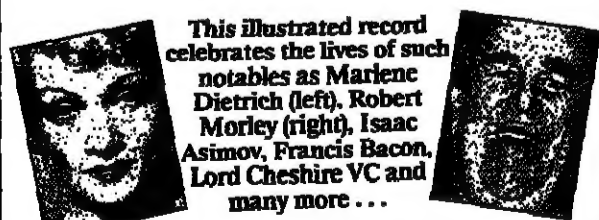


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Ministers rule out Keynesian quick fix

By Philip Webster, Chief Political Correspondent

EUROPEAN Community finance ministers delivered gloomy assessments of the state of the European economy yesterday but ruled out a Keynesian dash for growth.

The ministers and EC heads of government reached consensus on an outline package of national and European measures to boost the economy, agreeing to try wherever possible to protect capital projects to boost jobs.

In the final summit communiqué today, substantial loans from the European Investment Bank and the European

FINANCE

both the public and private sectors and on the need for efforts to free up the Community's labour markets.

The Chancellor summed up the mood of the meeting when he said in a BBC radio interview: "I have been concerned for some time that growth in Europe has been slowing markedly and that there are very considerable risks that the whole of Europe might move into quite deep recession."

The Community finance ministers are believed to have approved a lending package from the European Investment Bank of about £3 billion to be matched by funds from the private sector. In addition, the ministers are apparently considering calling a special conference to tackle the problem of unemployment.

Finance ministers do not normally attend the regular European summits. Their presence in Edinburgh was in response to criticism that the Community is spending too much of its time concentrating on internal affairs. That reached a peak at the one-day summit in Birmingham in October when the agenda was dominated by such complicated issues as subsidiarity and greater openness in the conduct of EC affairs.

Yesterday's talks took place against a background of fresh turbulence on the currency markets after rumours that the franc would be devalued. Theo Vajtel, the German finance minister, denied that ministers were talking about a realignment of currency parities in the exchange rate mechanism and said there was no reason to devalue France's currency.

PHS, Review, page 3

Scots men of arms come down from the hills to dispute cuts

By Ray Clancy



Note of dissent: Drum Major Iain Morrison of the Lennoxshire pipe band leading the demonstration at Princes Street Gardens to save Scottish units. Five regiments, including the Queens Own Highlanders, the Gordon Highlanders and the Scots Guards face cuts

THOUSANDS of demonstrators were on Edinburgh's streets yesterday as the politicians met behind closed doors at the summit.

Soldiers and ex-servicemen called for their battalions to be saved from defence cuts, and fishermen protested against the government's Sea Conservation Bill which could force them to tie up their boats for half the year.

A group of Greeks sang nationalist songs and waved banners calling for the European Community not to recognise the former Yugoslav republic of Macedonia as an independent state.

The Save Our Battalions rally in Princes Street Gardens was an emotional gathering. The tradition of the Scottish fighting man was remembered as 500 ex-servicemen stood proudly in the drizzle.

Lieutenant General Sir John MacMillan warned that thousands face unemployment and homelessness because of the peace dividend. Scotland is set to suffer more

PROTEST

than the rest of the country as it provides 13 per cent of the army although it has only 8.8 per cent of the population. Cuts affect the Kings Own Scottish Borderers, the Royal Scots, the Queens Own Highlanders, the Gordon Highlanders and the Second Battalion of Scots Guards.

Sir David Steel, the Liberal Democrat foreign affairs spokesman, told the rally that British servicemen had an important role to play in keeping world peace. "The idea that following the end of the Cold war we can do away with our infantry forces is quite wrong," he said.

He predicted that the role of United Nations peacekeeping forces would increase and more units like those in Bosnia would be needed.

The fishermen had travelled from all over Scotland to make their point. Asked if it was not a waste of time, as those who would decide the quotas were behind doors at Holyroodhouse one said: "I can't do anything else with my time because we have been prevented from fishing for the rest of this year."

Goalless first half leaves everything to play for

PETER RIDGWAY'S COMMENTARY

THE Edinburgh summit may be seen in retrospect as like a visit to the dentist, painful in anticipation, unpleasant at the time, but remembered with relief afterwards. It is a necessary, though tiresome, process. Commenting on the summit after one day is comparable to writing a report on a football match at half time. With the result still uncertain, the main focus is on the tactics, the feints, and the short-term manoeuvres.

Yesterday all the talk was over the precise wording of the draft declaration about

the Danes, and of detailed haggling over the future financing of the Community. Yet whatever happens later today — and the odds last night were still on an agreement over Denmark, over subsidiarity, and, probably, over future financing — more significant is the widespread view that the EC must resolve the arguments of the past 18 months over internal structure if it is to take decisions on other, more pressing is-

ues. The summit is of no comfort either to the ardent centralisers or to the outright opponents of the Maastricht treaty. The ambitions of the former for political and monetary union have been undermined by public doubts over European integration, and by the continued turbulence of financial markets, which yesterday again threatened the exchange-rate mechanism.

However, the opponents of Maastricht are deluding

themselves if they believe that the collapse of the treaty, through a Danish or British refusal to ratify, would end the matter. It would mean a further period of instability, not least in financial markets, with the prospect that most of the original seven EC countries would seek their own version of political and monetary union, excluding Britain.

Hopes that a deal acceptable to the Danish political parties might lead to an earlier referendum have prompted hints in recent days from British ministers that a

Commons third reading might be held earlier. This would allow full parliamentary approval by mid-summer, rather than by mid-autumn, as assumed now. A lot could obviously go wrong with these calculations, in Britain and Denmark.

Yesterday's discussion by finance ministers about a new growth initiative is, as usual, likely to involve merely an endorsement of the existing policies, and some largely cosmetic initiative to boost capital spending via the European Investment Bank.

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Major hopes treaty bill can be ratified by summer recess

By PHILIP WEBSTER AND GEORGE BROCK

JOHN Major is hoping to speed up proceedings on the Maastricht ratification bill if the Edinburgh summit today approves a deal allowing Denmark to hold a second referendum early next year.

In a move that would enrage Tory Euro-sceptics, the government would aim to accelerate the timetable on the bill to pave the way for a Commons third reading earlier than expected, probably soon after Easter. The bill's passage through the Lords would then be completed in time for it to receive the royal assent in July before the Commons summer recess. The government's intention was disclosed as European Community lawyers worked overnight in Edinburgh to come up with a formula that would allow Denmark legally binding opt-outs from the Maastricht treaty without requiring other member states to re-ratify it.

The government's disclosure that Maastricht may be ratified by mid-summer meets increasingly explicit demands being voiced by several EC leaders that Britain and Denmark should set limits to their delay. Helmut Kohl, the German chancellor, who has sometimes protected Mr Major from the threats of more impatient colleagues, told the meeting that the treaty must be approved throughout the Community by mid-1993. Herr Kohl also hinted that the other EC states would press ahead with a treaty based on Maastricht if Britain or Denmark failed to ratify. Felipe Gonzalez, the Spanish prime minister, and Jean-Luc Dehaene, the Belgian prime minister, made the same threat.

Herr Kohl also raised the prospect of a second referendum in the British plan to reconcile Danish voters to Maastricht. The leaders spent three hours yesterday morning debating the complex formula for qualifying Danish participation in political and economic union, but the discussion did little more than narrow down points of disagreement. British officials predicted that a fresh set of proposals prepared by EC ambassadors might be circulated to leaders overnight.

Denmark hopes for a legally-binding decision to consolidate its freedom to opt out of any future EC army, a single currency and joint immigration rules. Jean-Claude Pons, the head of the European Council of Ministers legal service, assured the leaders that the draft solution in front of them was both compatible with the treaty and would not require fresh ratification.

But Herr Kohl said that Germany might have to re-ratify a formal "decision" ensuring these exemptions. His officials explained later that his four legal advisers were split equally on whether new ratifications would be needed or not. German officials have suggested that the Danish agreement should be a "declaration". But Poul Schluter, the Danish prime minister, told his counterparts that a "decision" was necessary to convince Danish voters to reverse their rejection of the treaty in June's referendum.



Some ministers believe that once the Danes have ratified there is no reason why the British process should not be brought forward. They calculate that by March the Commons will be utterly bored by the bill and MPs will be glad to see the back of it.

Ministerial sources said: "Our aim and intention is to have the bill through before the end of the session, but if we can do it earlier we shall."

An opinion poll in the Copenhagen financial daily *Børsen* yesterday suggested that Danes would back a Maastricht treaty reinterpreted in line with Danish requests. Fifty-one per cent of those polled said that they would support a declaration from Edinburgh based on a "national compromise" drawn up by seven of the eight parties in the Danish parliament. The poll registered 37 per cent against and 12 per cent undecided.

Key decisions will be made by Danish MPs when they consider the results of the Edinburgh summit at meetings in Copenhagen tomorrow. Sources in the Socialist People's party have hinted during the past few days that they might refuse to back a deal based on the British proposals. Mr Schluter may try to take his Edinburgh deal to the voters without the socialist but he could thus put his minority government at risk.

If the Danes get their deal today, British ministers hope for an announcement from Mr Schluter that the second referendum will take place as early as March. "If we are able to reach an agreement that will help the Danes to stage their second referendum, the Community will have moved an awful long way towards them. It will be hoped that in return they can speed things up," ministerial sources said.

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On the threshold: John Major standing in the doorway of Holyroodhouse in Edinburgh yesterday as he waits for his fellow European leaders to arrive for the start of the summit, the last of his Community presidency

EC leaders list Brussels directives for repeal

By GEORGE BROCK

EUROPEAN Community leaders last night identified more than 20 Brussels directives for repeal, including directives unpopular in Britain with lifeboatmen, City takeover experts and Women's Institute jam-makers.

British officials said that the EC summit had approved a list of threatened directives presented by Jacques Delors, president of the European Commission, after Community officials had trawled through their rules looking for examples of Brussels exceeding its powers. The officials said that the directives now scheduled for repeal included one on provision of services which had complicated the work of lifeboat crews and St John Ambulance teams, one on over-detailed food labelling, one which had threatened to outlaw home-made jam and a takeover directive. But the list is the provisional result of work which is not due to be finished until the end of next year. Mr Delors list is a third the size of a longer list

SUBSIDIARITY

submitted to the Commission by Whitehall departments recently which included numerous EC laws on welfare, employment and the environment which British officials want to see reviewed.

Yesterday's debate in Edinburgh on "subsidiarity" also confirmed new broader rules aimed at ensuring that the EC does not act where national governments would do so more effectively. The detailed effect of the new rules will not be evident, although the new rules for both the Commission and ministerial councils are expected to come in force immediately, irrespective of whether the Maastricht treaty comes into force. The rules are based on an article in the Maastricht treaty which boosted national government powers to check the expansion of EC action.

□ **Opposition group:** A new alliance opposed to the Maastricht treaty was formed in Edinburgh last night after a meeting of a dozen groups who are against ratification (Ray Clancy writes).

One Danish speaker at the European Counter Summit predicted a second "no" vote and said that the government in Denmark was out of touch with what the people want.

"If we look at it from the Danish point of view the best thing would be not to ratify the treaty. Even from a European perspective there are so many countries that have problems with the treaty that again the best thing is to scrap it and start again" said Henrik Nielsen, one of the founders of the June Movement which is against Maastricht.

Bill Cash, the leading British Euro sceptic, said democracy in Europe was seriously threatened by an every increasing gap between governments and people.

A declaration was read out officially to launch the European anti-Maastricht Alliance. "The Maastricht treaty is likely to increase racial intolerance, unemployment, poverty and the gap between rich and poor nations" it said.

Ratpack looks for double trouble

Continued from page 1

itself as the Athens of the north. But nobody on Princes Street expected this to be taken quite so literally. Every hundred yards, groups of demonstrators, waving Greek flags and chanting classical slogans, were clustered beneath huge banners proclaiming "Alexander the Great was Greek, not Slav".

Greeks were everywhere: spilling out of hotels, blocking the entrances to the smart shops, filling the pavements with Maastrichtian fervour. Many sported badges saying "Greek Mayor" — as in indeed they were. In fact, 108 of them, roused to Aristotelian fever at the huge Athens rally on Thursday, decided then and there to charter a plane, fly to Scotland and make their philosophical point about the origins of Greek history.

Their arrival was the first of several processions to live up to the rainy day. In mid-morning, 11 pedigree Andalusian horses and a stubborn mule paraded around Calton Hill, sent there by the GMB union protesting at Britain's refusal to sign the social chapter. And earlier, 50 people dressed in the colours of the 12 EC flags ran round in circles outside the expensively converted royal residence, an action laden with symbolism while they stepped symbolically on nature, Denmark and the Third World.

As usual the anti-treaty demonstrators were holding their own rival summit elsewhere: the familiar crowd of Euro-rebels could not let slip this chance to fan the flame of dissent and the familiar voices of Bill Cash and Sir Teddy Taylor were ready with a quotation for any passing camera.

Edinburgh was determined to show a warm welcome to its guests: banners and posters, multilingual signs, bagpipes everywhere. But thirty Scots cannyness was still the rule. Why waste presents on the press? There were none of those golden bottles of Scotch each journalist dreamed of. In fact there wasn't anything of much for anyone. And even that was too much for most people. "I'll tell ye what," said one bus driver. "It's costing every working man in this city £3 on his poll tax bill. And what do we want to pay all that for? It's a question to which Mr Major sincerely hopes he will find a convincing answer today."

Sweden to take Efta presidency

Stockholm: Sweden will take over the rotating presidency of the European Free Trade Association in January instead of Switzerland, a spokesman for the prime minister, Carl Bildt, said. A Swiss minister said on Thursday that his country could not assume the Efta leadership after a referendum rejected joining the European economic area accord.

"Sweden will now become Efta president in January," the spokesman said, adding that this was six months earlier than Sweden was due to take over. The Swiss economy and trade minister, Jean-Pascal Delamuraz, said on Thursday it would not be possible for a country outside the economic area to preside over Efta at a time when all its efforts would be directed to setting up the new arrangement. The area would link Efta's seven states with the Community in a free-trade zone. Switzerland's rejection means the pact cannot enter force as planned on January 1. (Reuters)

Gaullist call for progress

Paris: A former French finance minister, Edouard Balladur, said the European Community should adopt a piecemeal approach and press ahead with union even though some countries may choose to stay behind.

M. Balladur, a Gaullist tipped as a possible prime minister, said in a radio interview that although the number of EC partners willing to go ahead with the Maastricht treaty would vary according to the issue involved, what mattered was to preserve what had been built in the past. (Reuters)

Embassy pelted

Madrid: Several thousand Spanish farmers pelted the United States embassy with vegetables and burnt an American flag in protest against the US-EC trade deal they say threatens their livelihood. (Reuters)

French clashes

Paris: Farmers and steelworkers clashed with police in protests in French towns against world trade talks, cheap Spanish wine and planned steel layoffs. At least five people were injured. (AP)

Greece puts case against Macedonia recognition

By MICHAEL BINYON, DIPLOMATIC EDITOR, CHRIS ELIOU IN ATHENS AND TIM JUDAH IN SKOPJE

ALMOST no headway was made by the Twelve foreign ministers on the recognition of Macedonia, one of the most vexed issues tackled by the summit.

A Greek spokesman gave a five-minute press conference to say that no movement had been made, and then refused to answer any questions. But inside the Palace of Holyroodhouse the Greeks mounted an offensive to prevent the EC overturning its

Libson declaration not to recognise the former Yugoslav republic under any name containing the word Macedonia. Britain's diplomatic shuttle between Athens and Skopje failed to bridge their differences, and officials forecast gloomily that they would be unable to resolve the name question, even when heads of government discuss Yugoslavia this morning. Instead, Britain lobbied its partners to speed up emergency aid to the landlocked republic, which has suffered huge losses as a result of sanctions against Serbia, and Greek restrictions on cross-border trade.

The summit had three options: to risk Greek anger, obstruction of other EC issues and a possible walkout by going ahead with recognition; the continued refusal to recognise the republic; and an agreement for each country to make up its own mind without a common EC policy.

In the latter case Macedonia is likely to take its case directly to the United Nations, appealing

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Gorbachev's creaking constitution blocks path of reform

By ANNE McELVOY

RUSSIA'S constitutional crisis, unleashed by President Yeltsin's attack on the Congress of People's Deputies — but provoked by its obstructiveness — was yesterday heading towards a forced compromise. Although the deal may prevent this clash becoming an all-out battle for power, it fails to tackle the deep difference of understanding between the liberal government and conservative opposition about the sort of society they want to emerge from the swamp of communism.

Russian Khasbulatov, the Congress chairman, put the matter succinctly in an outburst over suggestions that slower changes could be accommodated within the government programme: "This is not a disagreement about the pace or methods of reform. It is a disagreement about the whole aim of reform." The course of Congress over the past two weeks, culminating in Mr Yeltsin's declaration that he could no longer work with such a reactionary body and wanted a "them or me" referendum, has revealed the inadequacies of Russia's con-

stitution, faced with such a fundamental disagreement. The constitution has become little more than a totem which both sides can invoke when it suits them and ignore when it does not.

The Russian constitution is also handicapped by age. Based on the 1978 version, it needs more careful updating to the needs of an ethnically complex, volatile society than has yet been possible, with

parliament wrangling over proposed amendments. The primacy of Congress was built into the document by Mikhail Gorbachev when he convened the assembly in its present vast form to ensure legitimisation of his reforms. And Mr Gorbachev's tentative changes, intended to improve the Soviet Union and communism, not dissolve them, were as far as many deputies wanted things to go. That leaves

Mr Yeltsin with a legislature instinctively at odds with what he is trying to achieve but which can accurately describe itself as the highest law-making power in the land. The relationship between president and Congress is spelled out in the article specifying that the "president of the Russian Federation is to report to Congress..." — leaving no doubt that he is subject to it and not vice versa. He is

forbidden to dissolve the Congress, even by means of referendum. Mr Yeltsin says he is bound by loyalty to the people who elected him ahead of the constitution. He wants to end this stalemate by a referendum giving him the right to subvert (and probably dissolve) Congress. Congress responds that if anything is to be put to the people, it is Mr Yeltsin's presidency.

Russia's sudden constitutional crisis is rooted in her continuing political one: the failure of the post-communist culture to develop towards a civilised relationship between government and opposition. Russia is far from being a civil society and the idea of a loyal opposition is undeveloped. So too is the notion that the government would accept and respond to criticism. The past two days have provided a mixture of appeals to the people, pronouncements on the dangers to social peace, and declarations of the unbridgeability of the gap between Congress and the president — followed by a pathetic bout of the horse-trading which passes here for political concession.

The search for "compromise" dominates the political process: it is treated as a panacea in a context of half-understood democracy. However, compromise is regarded merely as giving up heads on platters. This personalises political debate to an absurd extent. How does the opposition respond to a dangerous split between the head of state and the highest legislature? It demands that the president get rid of the "most odious" figures in his entourage. A referendum on changing the constitution to rid Congress of its excessive power over the executive is long overdue.

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Deputies vote to bar Yeltsin referendum sets course for clash

FROM ANNE McELVOY IN MOSCOW

THE Congress of People's Deputies hit back at President Yeltsin yesterday, voting to block his move for a referendum to dissolve Congress and win public backing for his radical reforms.

The assembly adopted an amendment explicitly banning any plebiscite that would result in the dissolution of a high state body, including Congress. The decision is likely to complicate attempts to head off an all-out clash between the legislative and executive powers and adds a further spat to the power battles.

In its most direct attack yet on Aleksandr Rutskoi, the vice-president, the Yeltsin

camp accused him of disloyalty and overstepping his powers. Mr Rutskoi had attacked the president's policies and described his call for a referendum as divisive. "What is emerging is a progressive distancing from the president on Rutskoi's part," Vyacheslav Kostikov, Mr Yeltsin's spokesman, said. His statement went on to remind Mr Rutskoi that he had been elected on a common platform with the president and owed him support at a time of crisis.

The vice-president, whose sympathies lie with the main opposition Civic Union, said last night that he stood by his assault on the government and warned it not to divide

society into supporters and opponents of reform by pressing for too radical changes. "The slogan 'Us or Communism' has to be stopped for the sake of social peace," he said.

Mr Yeltsin met the chairman of the constitutional court to discuss ways out of the impasse and held talks behind closed doors with representatives of the Congress. The two sides had appeared to be edging towards agreement on a calmer approach after their discussions ended in a joint statement promising "unconditional resolve to settle problems between the legislative and executive authorities by constitutional means" and called on citizens to refrain from violence and strikes.

Mr Yeltsin met Russian Khasbulatov, the congress chairman and one of his main rivals, last night. But the rapprochement appears to have been hindered by Mr Khasbulatov's partisan performance in the Congress session in which he encouraged deputies to vote for the amendment outlawing a referendum on the assembly's future.

Despite their initially uncompromising stance both sides now seem keen to avoid a widening of the controversy — the government because it is less than confident that it can secure a convincing referendum win in the trough of reform and Congress because it has no wish to see its existence made the subject of public judgment.

The backroom negotiations that characterise Kremlin politics continued, with Mr Yeltsin reported to have agreed to postpone the referendum and dismiss two close aides in return for being allowed to keep Yegor Gaidar, his radical acting prime minister.

Trade flourishes while Kremlin squabbles

FROM BRUCE CLARK IN MOSCOW

INSIDE the Kremlin, the debate goes on and on. Outside a million varieties of commerce flourish in a world that seems to owe nothing to politics. Everywhere there are reminders of how hard it would be to put the clock back, whoever replaces President Yeltsin.

In theory, a neo-communist regime could stop the public sale to tourists of gold-braided communist banners, policemen's hats with hammer-and-sickle badges and even medals for valour. But that would only drive the trade underground. It would not alter the fundamentals that gave birth to this trade: desperate, impoverished Russians who like Western money better than the paraphernalia of a creed outworn.

In theory, a neo-communist regime could stop the collecting of money, in the underground passages that lead to Red Square, for the rebuilding of the Cathedral of Christ the Saviour. Yet nothing would convince people now that Stalin's destruction of the church was anything but criminal vandalism.

In a country where the mafia is nearly all-powerful and the security forces corrupt, there is probably only one way to limit the godfathers' influence, and that is to defend the right of almost anyone to sell almost anything, anywhere.

About six Russian politicians seem to understand this. One of them is the hane of Congress, Yegor Gaidar, the prime minister.



On watch: a Bosnian fighter scans the snow-covered landscape for the Serb enemy near the Bosnian-held town of Olovo, north of Sarajevo. The snow has brought a fall-off in fighting in the former Yugoslav republic

Snipers zero in on UK convoy's tyres

FROM RICHARD BEESTON IN SARAJEVO

NOBODY doubted that it was only a matter of time before the first sniper zeroed in on our slow-moving British convoy as it snaked through Sarajevo's no man's land. Although the white-painted trucks emblazoned with Union Jacks and United Nations emblems could not possibly have been mistaken for anything other than a relief convoy, the wrecks of other equally innocuous vehicles littering the roadside did not bode well for our passage along one of Sarajevo's most exposed roads.

"I just wish that Ukrainian escort would get a move on," said Colin Price, the convoy leader, echoing the growing concern among the ten British drivers over the slow pace of the Soviet-made armoured personnel carrier supposedly providing protection and deterrence against attack. In fact, the vehicle's protruding

machinegun barrel, wrapped in plastic against the snow, looked about as menacing as a half-open Christmas present.

"Frankly I think we would be better off without them," the British team leader said. His drivers, including an unemployed gifts dealer from the City and veterans of other relief missions, have come to rely more on their personal daily contacts with Serbs, Croats and Muslims to get them through checkpoints.

Since starting their operation in August they have had considerable success — so much so that they are today one of only two regular suppliers of aid to Sarajevo's population of a quarter of a million. The air link to the outside world has been cut for ten days just when food and medicines are most badly needed. Yesterday, however, the risk inherent in the British drivers' work became clear seconds

after the convoy passed between the lines of Serbian and Bosnian fighters in a devastated stretch of the city's former industrial zone. The long-expected crack of an assault rifle rang out followed by what sounded like the hiss of incoming artillery.

As it turned out, to the amusement of the British drivers, one of their vehicles had been hit by an invisible marksman, but the hissing sound was only the noise of two tyres deflating after being hit by the marksman's bullet.

The convoy reached the cover of a housing estate, where the limping vehicle was repaired, and a few harsh words were exchanged with a young, apologetic Ukrainian adjutant, who promised to move more quickly next time. Finally, the 147 tonnes of flour were delivered to the Bosnian capital's empty food warehouse and bakery. The

only casualty this time appeared to be the reputation of Gery Madison, the lead driver, from Folkestone, Kent, who holds the dubious title of being the only member of the British team whose lorry has twice been hit by sniper fire.

"It is okay to laugh it off today, there was no harm done. We were lucky," said Mr Price, whose operation, financed by the Overseas Development Administration, will include a run to Sarajevo on Christmas Day.

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NEWS ON BRIEF

Hamburg train kills 7 workers

Bad Oldesloe: An express train ploughed into a group of trackside railway workers in this suburb of Hamburg, killing seven of them and seriously injuring another.

The Copenhagen-Hamburg Eurocity was travelling at 85mph when the accident happened on Thursday night, officials said. The workers had been preparing to work on track sleepers. A statement said a lookout worker was surprised by the speeding train and unable to signal his companions in time. (AP)

Albstetten: Four people were killed when their Cessna light aircraft crashed into a railway line in Baden-Württemberg on Thursday, police said. (AFP)

Slovaks rush to become Czechs

Prague: Hundreds of Slovaks, fearful of the economic and political consequences of next month's break-up of Czechoslovakia, are daily applying for Czech citizenship, officials say.

Jan Ruml, the Czech interior minister, said: "This has been going on since October." Scholars and intellectuals, worried that Slovakia will be dominated by an authoritarian regime, are prominent among the applicants. (AFP)

Offices raided

Bonn: Police have seized tear-gas pistols, a computer and a quantity of neo-Nazi propaganda in 60 raids on offices of the recently banned right-wing German Alternative party, Rudolf Seiters, the interior minister said. (Reuters)

Salvage begins

La Coruña: Salvage teams started removing oil still in the Greek tanker, Aegean Sea, which ran aground off north-west Spain last week. They did not know how long the operation would take. (Reuters)

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Turkey denies turning conflict into jihad

FROM ANDREW FINKEL IN ISTANBUL

WHETHER it is meddling in already troubled waters or performing a moderating regional role, Turkey appears determined to have its say over the conflict in the former Yugoslavia.

Turkey has been consistent in demanding that the United Nations lift the arms embargo on Bosnia-Herzegovina and consider a show of force. Against charges that it is helping to superimpose a holy war on top of a set of ethnic conflicts, Turkey argues that it is channelling real moral outrage into the proper international forum and therefore undermining those who seek unilateral intervention. "While the Serbs are able to penetrate the embargo to get whatever they need, don't the Bosnians have the right to at least get the weapons to defend themselves?" a columnist wrote in *Milliyet*.

The government of President Ozal is also a key advocate of international recognition for Macedonia. It has signed a limited defence agreement with Albania and enjoys improved relations with the Sofia government after the low point in 1989 when 300,000 ethnic Turks fled Bulgaria for the border. "Turkey is involved in the Balkans, whether it wants to be or not," Ahmet Kot, who sits on the Bosnia solidarity committee, said. Sarajevo be-

came part of the Ottoman empire in 1463, ten years after the fall of Constantinople and well before many parts of what is now modern Turkey.

There are two million Turks of direct Bosnian descent, and an estimated fifth of the entire population is of Balkan ancestry. Paradoxically, those Turkish Bosnians are accused



Ozal backs recognition for Macedonia

of showing little interest in the fate of their brethren. A minority Islamic party in Turkey contrasts the West's reluctance to intervene in Bosnia to its eagerness to defend oil supplies in Kuwait, and criticises its government's reluctance to become more directly involved with the decision to send winter food relief to Armenia.

Dushanbe captured by communists

BY OUR FOREIGN STAFF

SPORADIC shooting echoed through the southern suburbs of Dushanbe, the Tajikistan capital, yesterday a day after former communist forces took control of the city, local journalists said.

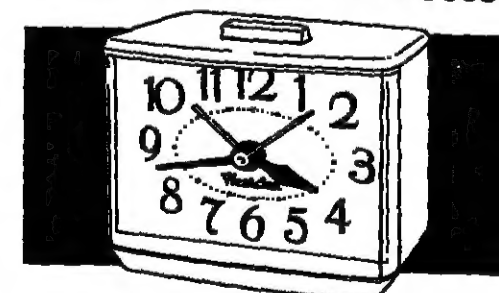
The former communists, backed by tanks and armoured vehicles, seized most government buildings after a day of gunbattles with Islamic guerrillas. Shooting could be heard in the southern Yul'tini area defended by Islamic forces, some of whom hid in a mosque.

There was no information on casualties. Russia's Nega news agency said local television showed hundreds of burnt corpses in the streets of the capital. It also said Dushanbe's mayor, Maksud Ikramov, a supporter of the Islamic forces, had been kidnapped by 15 men wearing Russian army uniforms.

Russian peacekeeping troops launched an operation against the Islamic fighters, accusing them of kidnapping four officers, Russian television said. An armoured column and a detachment of paratroopers were sent to a Dushanbe suburb to secure the release of the hostages, reported to have been captured by the Popular Democratic Army.

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Somali warlords sign pact to halt fighting in US-brokered deal

FROM SAM KILEY IN BAIDOA AND JAMIE DETTMER IN WASHINGTON

SOMALIA'S two main warlords yesterday signed an agreement to stop hostilities in Mogadishu and reunite the capital which has been divided by fighting since November last year.

The accord, signed in the rubble of the American embassy which was re-established by American marines earlier this week, was seen by observers as an important move towards establishing political stability in the East African country which collapsed into anarchy and civil war a year ago.

More experienced observers, and in particular aid officials, however, were shocked by the speed with which Robert Oakley, the American special envoy to Somalia, started talks with General Muhammad Farah Aidid and his rival, Ali Mahdi Muhammad, Somalia's self-styled interim president.

"These guys are nothing but

the worst gangsters the world has seen in a decade. They are the people who have held the aid agencies to ransom and forced them to hire armed guards at thousands of dollars a month while ensuring that guards are needed by organising the looting of agency properties and food convoys," a director of an aid organisation said. None of the officials critical of America's political initiative would allow their names to be used for fear of retaliation from the warlords.

The director of an agency working in Baidoa, where General Aidid's forces, along with those from the Somali Democratic Movement, have looted and attacked aid workers for a fortnight, said: "We know these men better than the Americans and there is no way that they should be treated as anything but criminals. Looting them as significant leaders merely legitimises over the last year and makes a mockery of trying to reach any long-term solution."

The agreement, signed and sealed with a handshake and an embrace between the two rivals — who come from the same Hawiye clan — made no mention of disarming or disbanding their respective armies but it did call on fighters to withdraw from the capital and for an opening of the green line dividing the city.

Other observers hailed the agreement and said that they were delighted that Mogadishu would no longer be divided. "This is the beginning of a vitally important normalisation process which will, one hopes, undermine the criminal element provided the huge numbers of guns in Somalia are taken out of the system,"

one observer said. The sudden vein of goodwill which Mr Oakley managed to mine in Mogadishu did not, however, extend right across strife-ridden Somalia. Gun battles were reported to be continuing in the port of Kismayu in the south of the Somali capital, raising the question whether clans and factions which have formed fragile alliances with the two main warlords will obey their orders now.

Although helpful for international relief efforts, the American-engineered deal may in the end draw America into a more expanded role than the Bush administration initially wanted. Mr Oakley's initiative in bringing the warlords together stretches the objective of the American intervention, Operation Restore Hope.

Boutros Boutros Ghali, the UN secretary-general, is adding to the pressure on the Bush administration to expand the objectives of Operation Restore Hope. In a meeting on Wednesday, Dr Boutros Ghali told senior State Department and Pentagon officials that he wanted American troops to stay in Somalia until they disarm the militiamen, remove mines in the north, train a civil police force and restore order.

In Brussels, Richard Cheney, the American defence secretary, reaffirmed that the bulk of the American troops in Somalia will return home within two or three months. Some Americans, in particular those concerned with logistics, combat engineering, water purification and civil affairs, would have to be "left behind" to support United Nations peacekeepers.

Deal with warlords, page 12



War and peace: General Aidid, left, shakes hands with his enemy, President Ali Mahdi, after signing a peace agreement yesterday

Intervention fails to raise hopes in village of dying

By SAM KILEY

DESPITE the United States Air Force reconnaissance jets now howling over their heads, women and children continued to die in Gob Gudud yesterday.

Victims of successive waves of looting armies under the command of General Muhammad Farah Aidid and of his enemy, Mohamed Siad Barre, the ousted president, about 50 refugees a day stagger into the tiny village, 35 miles south of Baidoa.

Most of them were nomads, wealthy in livestock and living proud lives independent of food relief. Since the civil war

in Somalia reached its climax a year ago, however, 350,000 people have died and an estimated 500 more go to their graves every day. In Gob Gudud the population of 20,000 falls by 15 a day despite the efforts of Care International and Goal, the Irish charity, which have set up feeding centres to try to stop the deaths.

Their work went well until the end of November, when fighting between General Aidid and Mohamed Hersi Morgan, Mr Barre's son-in-law, disrupted food distribution in Baidoa, 125 miles to the south. Since then, officials estimate, the village's popula-

tion has been swollen by at least 2,000 refugees.

Zarah Muhammad, 28, is a typical victim of the horrors that have struck central and southern Somalia. Three months ago her husband was killed and his camels and goats looted by Mr Morgan's men. She took refuge in Baidoa after two of her children and two of her brothers starved to death. In Baidoa she fell victim to the looting of food aid by General Aidid's men and moved on.

Like most of her clan she is a woman of humble beauty. But even the prospect of military intervention by America and its allies to put

an end to her starved wanderings could not raise a smile yesterday.

From the surrounding bush the occasional echo of firing from Jeeps mounted with 106mm recoilless anti-tank cannons could be heard from gunmen who had fled Baidoa to hide before the US forces deploy there. Mrs Muhammad had no doubt that the gunmen would decide when faced with the choice of giving up their guns and returning to civilian life or of continuing their outlaw existence preying on villages like Gob Gudud. "They will stay in the bush," she said.

Until American aid does get

here, newly arrived refugees shelter in daks, small domed huts made from twigs which they shove into the soft ground of a graveyard of famine victims. But since the disruption of food flights to Baidoa caused by the closing down of the air space over Baidoa by the US military, they cannot be supplied with plastic sheeting to keep the rain off.

On top of that, Care was unable to receive any food flights yesterday. "Every day that this happens the death rate climbs rapidly," James Fennell, a Care spokesman said. "The Americans must come soon."

Prince's arrest ordered

Kuala Lumpur: Malaysia's attorney-general has ordered the arrest of Prince Majid Idris in the state of Johore for allegedly assaulting an opponent after a hockey match.

The order came as the government planned to strip Malaysia's hereditary rulers of their immunity from prosecution amid an outcry over an alleged assault by the prince's father, Sultan Iskandar Ismail, on a hockey coach in a recent incident. (AFP)

Road disaster

Cape Town: Twenty children and three adults heading for a holiday here died when their overloaded pickup truck ran out of control and went under an oncoming vehicle, police said. (Reuters)

Three executed

Dubai: A Saudi woman and her mother were beheaded in the eastern province of the kingdom for shooting dead the woman's father while he slept, it was reported. A Saudi man was beheaded for drug smuggling. (Reuters)

Fire verdict

Sydney: An Australian judge acquitted Gregory Brown of murder but convicted him of manslaughter over a hotel fire in Sydney's Kings Cross district in which six foreign backpackers, including three Britons, died in 1989. (AFP)

Split decisions

Peking: A Chinese court in Shandong province, faced with increased broken marriages, has started a school for divorcing couples to help them part amicably or be reconciled, it was reported. (Reuters)

Clinton tacks to the left with second team of appointments

FROM MARTIN FLETCHER IN WASHINGTON

BILL Clinton, the US president-elect, was announcing a second batch of appointments yesterday that was likely to be well to the left of the mainstream economic team he unveiled on Thursday.

Robert Reich, an Oxford colleague of Mr Clinton's, dubbed a "national economic planner" by his critics, was expected to be named labour secretary. Laura D'Andrea Tyson, a Berkeley economist and trade "hawk", was reportedly to become the first woman to chair the president's Council of Economic Advisers. Donna Shalala, the Wisconsin University chancellor, whom a right-wing columnist yesterday called a "founding mother of the political correctness movement", was likely to be named secretary of health.

Mr Clinton, who resigns as Arkansas governor today, was also expected to appoint a third woman, Carol Browner, as head of the Environmental Protection Agency. A former aide to Al Gore, the vice president-elect, Ms Browner is

leading efforts to protect the Everglades as Florida's top environmental regulator.

Mr Reich, a diminutive figure with an English wife, was the architect of Mr Clinton's economic plan, and his appointment would signal the priority Mr Clinton places on education and training.

Phil Gramm, a Republican senator, called the Harvard lecturer a "state socialist". But Mr Reich, 46, does not advocate a conventional industrial policy that lavishes aid on selected industries. He argues that in a global economy businesses will take the money but still flee to cheap-labour nations. He suggests public investment should be concentrated on two assets that cannot leave the country — the workforce, and infrastructure projects ranging from roads to hi-tech communications.

Similarly, Ms Tyson, aged 45, veers more towards "managed trade" than free trade, but is not a traditional protectionist. She rejects overt trade retaliation in favour of "count-

ervailing subsidies" to help industries hurt by subsidised foreign products.

On Thursday, Mr Clinton named Lloyd Bentsen, an influential Texas senator, as treasury secretary. Strategy will probably be shaped more by Mr Reich, Leon Panetta, the new budget director, and Robert Rubin, the investment banker who is to head the new policy-coordinating Economic Security Council. They argue for short-term economic stimulation, followed by determined action to cut the deficit and increase investment.

Bush honours: President Bush bestowed the Presidential Medal of Freedom on ten Americans: Audrey Hepburn, the actress; Ella Fitzgerald, singer; David Brinkley, broadcaster; Johnny Carson, TV personality; I.M. Pei, architect; Richard Lee Petty, stock car driver; Harry Shandleman, diplomat; Isaac Stern, violinist; General John Vessey; and Ellie Wiesel, author.

Leading article, page 13

Yemen riots spread

FROM CHRISTOPHER WALKER IN CAIRO

YEMEN, one of the poorest but most picturesque countries in the Arab world, was rocked by price riots for the third day running yesterday, with police in Sanaa, the capital, firing above the heads of hundreds of demonstrators to disperse them.

At least 12 people have been killed and 77 wounded since the violence began on Wednesday, when students and workers rampaged through the streets of the provincial city of Taiz to protest against a decision by taxi drivers to raise their fares. Promised parliamentary elections have been postponed twice in recent months because of a series of bomb attacks.

Taiz is subject to a dusk-to-dawn curfew now, and the violence has spread to at least three other cities, apart from Sanaa. The demonstrators have attacked government and private offices, and set fire to government vehicles.

Tokyo reshuffle

Two survive Japan cabinet purge

FROM AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE IN TOKYO

KIICHI Miyazawa, the Japanese prime minister, replaced all but two of his ministers yesterday, naming a former trade official and trusted ally as finance minister amid the worst economic downturn since the 1970s.

The sole survivors of the cabinet reshuffle were Michio Watanabe, the foreign minister and deputy prime minister, and Masumi Tanabu, the agriculture minister, currently embroiled in talks on opening Japan's rice market.

A former official of the

ministry of international trade and industry, Yoshiro Hayashi, replaced Tadamasa Hata as finance minister. In the ruling Liberal Democratic Party, Mr Hayashi heads Mr Miyazawa's faction.

Mr Hata, who had been in the job for barely a year, had been expected to step down to party affairs as head of a splinter group within the faction of Noboru Takeshita, the former prime minister.

Amid the continuing allegations that Mr Takeshita used

underworld help to secure the premiership in 1987, his faction's grip on politics was confirmed in the line-up of the new cabinet.

Yoshiro Mori, a former education minister, replaced Kozo Watanabe as minister for international trade and industry. The new director-general of the economic planning agency is Hajime Funada, at 39 the youngest person to serve in a cabinet. Mr Hayashi, 65, brings considerable economic experience to his post of finance minister.

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Beatle fans get wind of dream encore

FROM BEN MACINTYRE IN NEW YORK

THAT old rock 'n' roll rumour may finally be coming true after Paul McCartney announced in New York that the three surviving members of the Beatles would be reuniting for a ten-part BBC documentary about the group.



McCartney: spoke of BBC documentary

At a news conference to announce his world tour next year, McCartney said that he, George Harrison and Ringo Starr would all take part in the Beatles television "anthology". "There is a chance that we

might actually do a little bit of music," he said.

John Lennon was murdered in New York 12 years ago, and Harrison once indicated that the remaining three Beatles would never get back together. The band dissolved acrimoniously in 1970, but ever since there have been regular reports of a possible reunion — none of which were ever substantiated by the former Beatles.

Neither Starr nor Harrison has commented on the latest developments, but this week McCartney said: "I actually just saw George yesterday in California and we're getting together for this thing, so it's bringing us together."

McCartney, 50, who wrote most of the Beatles songs with Lennon, said it was unlikely that the most famous pop group ever would permanently reunite. "Rather than put big pressure on us and say, 'The Beatles are reforming', probably it will happen a bit more naturally and we'll get together for this [documentary]."

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Philip Howard

Why not stem the floods of useless words by paying our writers not to write?

We are in danger of drowning in a sea of words, and being driven batty by a Babel of voices, not just from the mountains issuing statements from Edinburgh. If there really is alien life out there in Outer Space, the aliens can have no doubt about the existence of planet Earth. They can hear us coming from a million miles away, and it is not a pretty or a coherent noise.

The new divine right of every man and woman consists of being able to express themselves in public, so as to imagine that they have become cobs for quarter of an hour. We are all speaking and scribbling at once, and nobody is listening or reading the rubbish. Perhaps it ill behoves a daily journalist to grumble about the excess of verbiage in the world, since with his daily ejaculation of words he is one of the polluters of the language. As part of his job, he is supposed to read all the papers every day, to see what the opposition is up to, and to magpie good ideas. In practice it is impossible to read even his own paper properly, if it is a grown-up broadsheet. So he learns to read selectively and fast.

Things were a lot easier when there were fewer words around. When the entire nation tuned in on the wireless to the news or *Hancock's Half Hour*, there really was no alternative, and the programmes seemed better. In that golden age, the dinner-jacketed newscaster would announce: "There are no more news tonight," and play some Mozart to use up his time. The proliferation of radio and television channels has produced a wilderness of cave-dwellers instead of the promised global village. When there was just one daily newspaper and two weekly magazines, most people used to read them, and they became the noticeboards and debating chambers of the ruling class.

The state of the word is even worse with books. There are still 60,000 published a year in the United Kingdom. Even if you discard 58,000 of them, as you should, as rubbish or vanity or specialist works for a different tribe, I still cannot read six books a day. One of the reasons for the popularity of literary prizes such as the Booker and the Whitbread is that "experts" choose for you the books that are worth reading this year. They may (do) often get it wrong, but at least they reduce the field to a manageable size. So crowds rush out to buy the selected few, and then grumble about the judges, or leave the books lying around unread to impress the neighbours.

Once the cuttings file on any topic was a little envelope of dog-eared and heavily foxed press clippings. The electronic data explosion has made selection harder by increasing information a millionfold. Today thousands of articles on any topic under the sun from hundreds of publications all round the world are available at the tap of a format, and are quite useless, as they stream down my screen like Niagara.

One way of reducing the flood of words might be to pay "write aside" for not writing, as we are (insanely) paying farmers set aside not to grow things. The trouble with that is that although nobody but a blockhead ever wrote or broadcast except for money, the world is full of blockheads who would actually pay to express themselves in public. It is good for democracy, I suppose, though not for sanity or the language, that the media of communication are available to all, and not just to the ruling élite. But the élite were sometimes literate and articulate, and even sane. Radio phone-ins and chat shows are the neatest most pitiful example of whither communications democracy leads.

There is consolation that the problem is not new, though it has become extreme. Dr Johnson observed: "It is strange that there should be so little reading in the world, and so much writing. People in general do not willingly read, if they can have anything else to amuse them." He also did not waste his time reading books *through*, at a time when there were only a handful of books published each year. I resolve to stop feeling guilty about what I do not have time to read, and to stop reading any book or article as soon as it bores me. We must become ruthlessly selective in our modern wilderness of words.

America must avoid shoring up Somalia's unrepresentative and violent men, argues I.M. Lewis

The immediate problem confronting all constructive peacemaking in Somalia is how to deal with the warlords, especially the two faction leaders of the capital Mogadishu, General Muhammad Farrah Aidid and Ali Mahdi Muhammad. These men belong to rival sections of the Hawiye family of clans and are loosely allied with other militias and clan groupings. Although each claims to be the legitimate leader of the Hawiye based United Somali Congress, and Ali Mahdi has a phantom government of discredited politicians of different clans, neither has any national support or moral authority to form a new Somali administration.

The eagerness of each of these two men to embrace the invading Americans, and their agreement to meet at the UN mission in Mogadishu yesterday, is thus easily understood. As the Somali proverb puts it, "Either be a mountain or attach yourself to one."

But America must be aware of the dangers. Peacemaking between these figures and any of the other warlords can only be a

short-term expedient and cannot in itself lead to the formation of a viable Somali government.

Yet, if it is sensitively directed the US military intervention could help to pave the way for the reconstruction of the Somali state (or states), as well as delivering urgent food and medical supplies, to the beleaguered civilians of southern Somalia. This political objective requires a wider cast of characters representative of all the clans of southern Somalia and chosen democratically by them. It means passing and, ideally, marginalising and disarming the militias of these self-appointed leaders in southern Somalia. Only then will it be possible for representative leaders to emerge from the clan elders, who do possess the appropriate moral authority, to discuss the form of a future government.

What is needed now and

could be provided by the US force, is the pacification of southern Somalia as well as the envisaged repair of communications. As long as military support is available, the UN could organise clan assemblies and the inter-clan meetings which would be a precondition for political reconstruction.

This, of course, assumes an enlarged UN administration. It also presupposes that these developments take place gradually, against an expanding background of peace and may require years rather than months. Somali elders' deliberations are always protracted and require great patience from those awaiting their outcome. But there are hopeful signs in the north east and also in the self-declared "Somaliland republic" of the north west, where the elders rather than the "moderate" political leaders have made great strides in reducing inter-clan strife and opening up

trade.

So the greatest political contribution the Americans could make in the south would be to neutralise the military advance of General Aidid, making him compete on an equal footing with less blood-thirsty clan elders. This could well mean moving his disorganised but deadly young clan militiamen (the *Murjan*, are usually high on opium and other drugs) out of Mogadishu back to their own clan territory north of the city. Mogadishu could then return to being a town safe for people of all clans. America should equally insist that Ali Mahdi's Abgal clan followers cannot exert a monopoly of control, and thus put a stop to the vicious purges of rival clans.

At the same time, the UN and all those states (not least France) which are providing humanitarian aid to Somalia should announce that recognition of any future Somali government

will depend on it being clearly democratically elected by the elders of all the clans.

If the *pax americana* is effective the protection rackets which Somali entrepreneurs have struck up with the various aid agencies could be reduced if not eradicated. This protection money, plus the food and supplies such "guards" regularly loot from their own and other non-governmental organisations, fuels the Somali inter-clan war effort.

Peace and reconstruction would be greatly helped if the import from Kenya of the stimulant qat drug which plays such a lucrative role in the murderous Somali war economy were to be curtailed. This would mean stopping the qat flights from Kenya and mounting some kind of air surveillance along the Somali border with Kenya.

On the economic side, President Bush's initiative to secure

the safe delivery of humanitarian aid to the inter-riverine region in southern Somalia which, as the rather poorly informed media coverage has belatedly come to appreciate, contains farmers traditionally disparaged by Somali pastoralists, represents the first step in rehabilitating Somalia's main bread basket. Villagers returning to these lands will be able to contribute once again to reducing Somalia's food deficit.

Even if the US intervention is restricted to this ravaged southern region, reducing the power of the warlords would be an important contribution to the democratic reconstruction of Somalia. If, however, as some commentators fear, the effect of US intervention is to shore up the power of Aidid, Ali Mahdi and other dubious figures who have made no effort to facilitate humanitarian relief, and who many Somalis consider to be war criminals, that will be disastrous and add further misery to the country's long catalogue of man-made calamities.

The author is professor of anthropology at the LSE.

A boost for the prince's party

The separation will free the Prince of Wales to pursue his eccentric and challenging role

WAS greater bog-wash ever written? No, the end of the royal marriage is not "a moment of great sadness". It surely marks the terminus of sadness, the chance of renewed joy. No, this was not, as the Father of the House of Commons said, "one of the saddest announcements made by any prime minister in modern times." The constitution was not affected: it was no business

SIMON JENKINS

of this publicity-crazed Parliament. Nor should it be a prelude to yet more sanctimoniousness as and when there is a divorce.

We already knew that there was no lack of sadness in this the world's most public marriage. Perhaps some judicious sadness might have been in order when two plainly incompatible people decided to wed in 1981. It was sad when they realised their incompatibility and realised that nothing but misery for them and their children lay in going on.

This was a palpably unhappy relationship. Sadness was certainly in order when their life together became so intolerable, when every twist of the knife of woe was photographed, bugged and amplified by the tabloid press. The latter's own professed "sadness" on Thursday might usefully be referred to a clinical psychiatrist.

How can it be sad that an excruciating agony is over? Two older and wiser people are released, like thousands of others each year, to rebuild their happiness free of the incubus of a past failure. Why do we continue to visit damnation on such people? Divorce is only a stigma to those who believe that unhappiness is good for the soul, that the most devastating of promises must be kept against all evidence of error. Divorce-as-stigma is the curse that the happily married inflict on the unhappily married, often using the supposed fate of children to rub salt in the wound.

It is an archaic cruelty, the emotional equivalent of the rich despising the poor.

If a moral must be drawn it is surely not that incompatible marriages are too easily ended, but that they are too easily begun, encouraged by the churches and surrounded by ritualised euphoria of which the Prince of Wales's wedding was the epitome. That the churches do so little to discourage unsuitable marriages yet so much to condemn — in the case of Anglicans and Catholics reject altogether — divorce and remarriage compounds human unhappiness. It is enticing young people to walk a high wire without a safety net.

All this is of public importance only because Britain persists in primogeniture as basis for selecting its head of state. The Princess of Wales can retreat (or be excluded) from the court, marry one of her circle and become a normal Mrs. But she remains mother of Prince William, second in line to the throne. The British people seem



Politicians and the monarchy: Charles James Fox shown by Gillray in 1788 giving away Mrs Fitzherbert in a secret marriage to the Prince of Wales

happy to rely for monarchy on the accident of heredity — if only because any other method would mean more politicians. If the matter were put to a public vote, I have little doubt that the House of Windsor would win any presidential hands down.

But monarchy is voluntary on both sides. Heredity may depend on the accident of birth, but the accident can always be overridden if it inconveniences the state. This happened in 1688, 1714 and 1936. The constitutional implications of a royal divorce are significant but not problematic. Any member of the royal family can abdicate or disclaim. Any law can be changed: the government could usefully propose changing the indefensible ones on royal marriages and church establishment. As Henry VIII doubtless reflected, it all depends on people.

What is now before us is the hope that a less pre-occupied prince might more vigorously pursue causes dear to his heart. If, as seems likely, his mother

refuses to stand down in the near future, a "prince's party" is certain to become a prominent feature of public life. Prince Charles clearly understands that being partisan towards issues is distinct from being partisan towards a party (despite his private enthusiasm for the SDP). He is too sensible to become another aspiring Prince Regent in league with the Foxites.

What he offers is a platform for eccentric views in a political culture that is becoming far too centralised in Westminster. Any pluralism is refreshing. Britain needs more confrontations with architects, doctors, teachers, farmers, with the professional interests before which John Major and his ministers cower. (The prince should next have a go at bankers, lawyers, academics and journalists.)

As for his eccentricity, he put it well in a recent speech: "There should be somebody in public

life ready to be ridiculed for speaking of metaphysics and the soul."

Nothing is more absurd than this week's talk that the separation somehow implies the prince disclaiming the throne in favour of his son. The more active and controversial the prince becomes, the more welcome the prospect of his succession. His challenging of conventional wisdom has given monarchy a novel spin. He offers the nation a monarch of culture and good taste, a patron of the arts and a champion of the outsider, the oddball. This has not been true since the Hanoverians, 18th-century savours of the British monarchy.

What the prince should do is take risks, risks even with the mystique of monarchy. He should sue for libel. He should lobby more overtly. He should break out of the financial strait-jacket in which palace convention keeps him, exploiting the Duchy revenues, accepting outside backing and sponsorship. As for what happens to his

son and the post-Caroline monarchy, that is not today's business. In ten years Prince William will be 20. Brought up mostly by his mother and presumably a stepfather outside the stifling confines of his grandmother's court, he will surely want to lead a normal life, earn a normal income. He is far more likely than his father to disclaim any wish to take on the awful burdens of kingship.

But if William does not disclaim, I imagine he would not shrink from following his father onto the public platform. What else can an heir to the throne do but "rule by influence and example"? I expect he would diverge strongly from his father's idiosyncratic world view and become spokesman for the next generation. We would then have the intriguing prospect of not one prince's party but two: the party of post-modernism, acupuncture and come against that of Nintendo, trainers and grunge. At least it beats Labour against Tory.

So let's all cheer up.

A post-modern Windsor?

LORD RODGERS, a founding member of the SDP and the director general of the Royal Institute of British Architects, is about to fan the flames of controversy surrounding the restoration of the fire-damaged Windsor Castle. Rodgers, who favours a modern design to replace the charred remains of the historic building, appears to have won the ear of the heritage secretary Peter Brooke.

The pair lunched together this week and Rodgers says the heritage secretary dropped a thinly veiled hint over the dessert that he is not

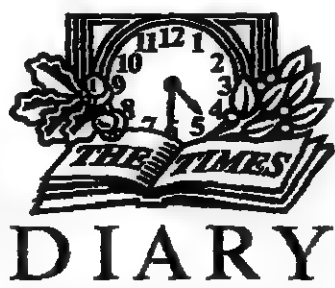
unsympathetic to the idea of a modern reconstruction. "He does not take it for granted that the restoration of the castle has to be to its previous style. Peter Brooke did nothing to discourage the idea that RIBA should be looking for alternative solutions to the problem of the rebuilding," Rodgers says.

"Neither Windsor Castle nor any other historical building should necessarily be restored to precisely the form that it was in before."

RIBA is holding a seminar and exhibition in the new year to examine the Windsor options. "We want to stimulate a national debate. The exhibition will be open to the public, as many of the rooms damaged in the fire were used by the public," says Rodgers.

His stance is in contrast to that adopted by the Royal Fine Art Commission, whose chairman, Lord St John of Fawsley, likes Sir Jeffrey Wyatville's 1824 design for St George's Hall and would delegate supervision of the project to the Prince of Wales, a noted traditionalist.

Rodgers says: "Prince Charles will have a proper role in the restoration of the private apart-



ments. We would not want to try to intrude upon that." But he stresses the importance of a wide debate about the castle's public parts, "especially as such large sums of public money are involved". Lord St John disagrees: "Prince Charles knows more about architecture than most architects."

The plot thickens

KEITH Means's and Mary Seal's new year resolution in 1993 may well be to do things on a smaller scale. The couple, from Walsall, are spending close to £100,000 to stage (stand by for the full title) The First International Conference That Exposes A Global Deception in the Wembley arena, north London, on January 9 and 10.

Means and Seal, who are cashing in their insurance policies, remort-

gaging their house and investing their life savings in the event, have so far sold only 50 tickets. The stadium seats 12,000.

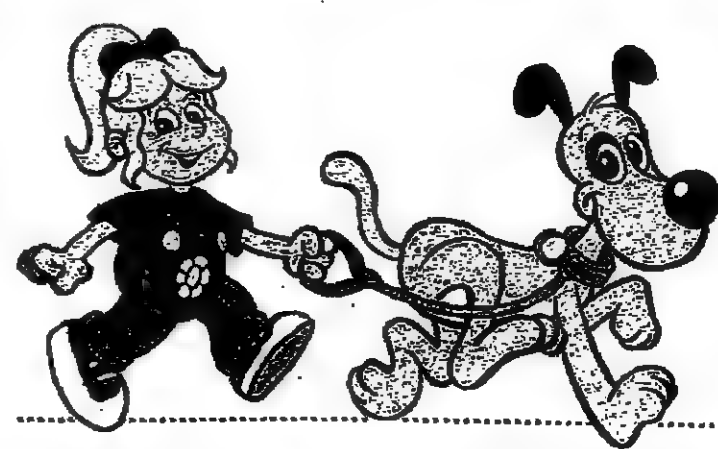
They are flying in eight speakers from around the world for the two 12-hour sessions, which they promise will reveal the people "who really run the planet". The couple believe the world is run by "an hereditary élite of several hundred fanatically powerful people who have, among other things, financed both the Russian revolution in 1917 and the rise of Adolf Hitler".

A spokesman for Wembley says: "I've spoken to the organisers several times. They are quite rational people, oddly enough."

Dry run-up

COMMANDER Tim Lawrence, according to his friends, is not a man for riotous living, which is just as well. Lawrence, one of only two people guaranteed to turn up at Cranite church today, appears to have forsaken the traditional pleasures of a stag night.

The Princess Royal's first husband Mark Phillips had a memorable night in November 1973 at Julie's restaurant in Notting Hill, when he and 13 fellow dragon of fies drank 14 bottles of wine and liqueurs and sang communally for



After Laika's trip one could forgive a canine for shunning space travel, but Digswell, the cartoon dog created by the Midlands-based Storm Group, loves it. Launched into space in a Russian rocket last month, he has become the mascot of America's Young Astronauts' Council.

an hour. Phillips downed a bottle of Mumm champagne in three minutes, according to the manager.

But while Lawrence will not be hitting the hot spots of Cranite, he has not eschewed celebration entirely. A woman answering the phone at his brother Jonathan's house in Wiltshire yesterday said: "They drove up today. I think they are having a party, wouldn't you?" The locals at Lawrence's pub, the

King Alfred in Winchester, will toast the wedding today with Tim's Tipples, a mixture of rum, champagne and a secret ingredient. A group of Korean shamans have also performed a Korean marriage blessing for the couple.

Suspicious summit

FURTHER tales of mystery from the Scandic Crown hotel in Edin-

burgh. Yesterday the Diary disclosed that the hotel had cancelled the Campaign for an Independent Britain's alternative EC summit at short notice to make way for the Danish government. Now it appears to have forgotten the booking entirely, despite the eminence of some of the campaign's members — Bryan Gould, Peter Shore and Bill Cash.

Two elderly Canadian women, Rowena MacKenzie and Winifred Alston, who had reserved rooms in the Scandic some months ago so that they could attend the anti-Maastricht meeting, were told by hotel staff that they knew nothing about it.

When the women, both in their seventies, persisted in asking about the alternative summit, staff asked why they were so interested. Half an hour later a plain-clothes police officer knocked at their bedroom door. They were "interrogated" and asked for identification. The officer, polite and apologetic, explained that it was because of the terrorist risk. "I said it was ridiculous to think we were terrorists. He did everything but take our fingerprints," says Miss MacKenzie. Unperturbed, they eventually found the new venue across the road in the Carlton Highland Hotel and enjoyed the meeting.



KREMLIN BRINKMANSHIP

The constitutional struggle is doomed to continue

Boris Yeltsin could be forgiven a degree of nostalgia for the heady days of August 1991, when he riveted the attention of Russia and the world as he successfully defied the leaders of the coup against Mikhail Gorbachev from the top of a tank. Nothing since in Russian politics has been as clear-cut as that heroic confrontation. The demand, and the need, for effective government are unmistakable. But leadership has fallen victim to a Soviet-vintage constitution, which thoroughly confuses the respective decision-making powers of executive and legislature.

On Thursday, Mr Yeltsin appeared to have clambered back on his tank, threatening to lead the people in revolt against "the bulwark of conservative forces and reaction". Infuriated by the condemnation in the Congress of People's Deputies of his reform programme and by its rejection of Yegor Gaidar, his chosen prime minister, he accused the congress of attempting, by way of "a creeping coup", to block the path of reform. He demanded a popular referendum next month to determine who ruled Russia: the president, or the congress and its standing parliament, the Supreme Soviet. If he won, the legislators would face elections; if defeated, he pledged himself to call fresh presidential elections.

Yesterday, horse-trading resumed in the Kremlin, though not before the congress had passed a constitutional amendment banning a referendum that would result in its dissolution. Both sides having declared the gift between them to be unbridgeable, Mr Yeltsin and Russian Khasbulatov, the chairman of both legislatures who has become one of the president's bitterest opponents, began a search for compromise.

Mr Yeltsin may have intended no more, all along, than to recoup the defeats he had suffered in the congress by shocking his opponents into a more accommodating mode. Economic hardship has made in-

roads into his own popularity, but the opposition is anything but coherently organised. Both parliamentary bodies contain majorities capable of blocking government legislation, but these majorities are made up of marriages of convenience between hardliners such as Mr Khasbulatov, who opposes "the whole aim of reform", and moderates who question its pace and emphasis. Equally, so unpopular are many aspects of the government's reforms that Mr Yeltsin courted the risk that, if parliamentary elections were held, many of the same conservatives might be returned — this time reinforced by a real democratic legitimacy. Mr Yeltsin is clearly itching for a showdown, but at a time of his choosing.

The president may thus have gambled that this time his opponents would draw back from a referendum designed as a straight contest between president and parliament, calculating that the odds were against them. He would then be in a stronger position to cancel his earlier concessions on economic policy, which he now says he regrets, and insist, as he did yesterday, on the survival in office of his entire government team and the maintenance of the main thrust of its programme.

For the moment, all factions have good reason to defer subjecting their performance to popular judgment. If Mr Yeltsin draws back from the brink, Russia will be spared a winter of political campaigning. But an inconclusive end to this latest skirmish will do little to redeem the political class in the eyes of most Russians, who are weary of Kremlin rhetoric from whatever source. The struggle for power between executive and legislature, no less genuine for being confused, is doomed to continue. Russia needs political stability as well as economic reforms. But for that it needs constitutional change. And no one, not even Mr Yeltsin, has a risk-free strategy for bringing this about.

CLINTON'S TEAM

His economic appointments make for a shrewd political mix

President-elect Bill Clinton promised during his election campaign to focus "like a laser beam" on the economy if he won. True to his boast, his first appointments, announced on Thursday, were to economic positions. To a political world in limbo between presidents, they give some clues to the kind of administration Mr Clinton is likely to head.

His most important appointee, Lloyd Bentsen, far from being a fellow baby-boomer, will be a seventy-something treasury secretary. For the new president, Mr Bentsen has two obvious advantages: he offers the conservatism needed to reassure the financial markets, and he has over 20 years of congressional experience.

Mr Clinton has a good chance of escaping the 12-year deadlock between the White House and Congress. This has been partly due to party political tensions; a Democratic president will find it easier to work with a Democratic Congress. But it is also due to the systemic difficulties of getting tax and spending legislation through a Congress whose representatives all want fiscal chastity, but not yet, and not in their backyards.

Mr Bentsen is precisely the sort of Washington insider whom voters professed to despise. But his skills will be much needed. Mr Bentsen's years as chairman of the senate finance committee should make him the perfect gamekeeper alongside the new budget director, Leon Panetta, chairman of the house budget committee.

But if these two men represent fiscal conservatism, Mr Clinton's latest appointments, announced last night, lean towards the other side. Robert Reich, the new labour secretary, is a keen proponent of industrial policy. Laura D'Andrea Tyson, who will chair the

president's Council of Economic Advisers, is also enthusiastic about intervention in the micro economy to restore competitiveness.

Two questions hover over the new team. Will they be able to cut the federal deficit? And do they have protectionist tendencies? For the first, the intent at least is there. Both Mr Bentsen and Mr Panetta have excoriated the deficit and tried hard on Capitol Hill to put their fiscal conservatism into action. But Mr Clinton is committed to raising federal spending both on public investment and on health services. His assumptions about the revenue he can raise through higher taxes on the rich and on multinational companies are wildly optimistic.

Mr Clinton should draw back from plans to stimulate the economy through public spending. Growth is already returning far faster than was expected during the campaign: the third quarter saw a 3.9 per cent annual increase and the latest consumption figures, out yesterday, showed spending continuing to pick up. Unemployment is falling and consumer confidence is at its highest since the end of the Gulf war.

Protectionism is still a fear. Mr Bentsen is no instinctive free-trader although he does favour the North American Free Trade Agreement. Ms Tyson has been painted, probably unfairly, as a rabid protectionist. She is keener on the use of government action to promote exporting industries than on restricting imports.

The best signal Mr Clinton could give to an apprehensive world would be to restate his commitment to GATT. Meanwhile he could preach the virtues of free trade to a country that is all too ready to blame foreigners for its economic problems.

ART MATTERS

Sponsorship of the arts is working even in hard times

Business and the arts used to form one of those great binary oppositions in British society — science and humanities, town and country, north and south of the Humber. The way they have learned to live and work together for mutual support and comfort is a success story of the past decade. As the Prince of Wales said yesterday, when he presented prizes of ceramic bowls to the Association for Business Sponsorship of the Arts awards scheme: "We need a prosperous culture just as much, if not more, than we need a culture of prosperity."

True, oh rhetorical speech-writer. But it has been recognised as true only very recently. British business used to look down on the arts as unprofitable and irrelevant and "wet". The arts were snuffy about any whiff of proprietary sponsorship, and reluctant to allow a taint of commercial promotion to break their quaint virginity.

Such attitudes were snobbish and un-historical. Without the patronage of the business and political Establishment, fixed by Gaius Maecenas, the Saatchi of his age, Western culture would not have had Virgil, Horace, Propertius, and others whose shadows still overhang writers at their word processors. Without the plebeian Medici, and their success in business and banking, Florence would not be the queen of Renaissance culture. Without the Tates and the grocer Sainsburys, London would not have become the cynosure for looking at great paintings that it is.

In 1976 the best estimate of the value of

business sponsorship of the arts was only an ineffectual £600,000. Earlier this month ABSA's annual report showed that arts sponsorship was worth £65.5 million this year, and rising. Both sides have become more imaginative and less stuffy, fast.

Business no longer wants to sponsor only the safe blockbusters such as *Tosca* at Covent Garden or the National Theatre's *Carousel*. One of this year's winners is Edwin Shirley Trucking for its sponsorship of Battersea Arts Centre's adaptation of the Marquis de Sade's *120 Days of Sodom*, no less.

The relationship has grown closer and more intelligent, as well as more profitable in both directions. Hard-nosed management and money skills are being transmitted by voluntary placements into the arts under the Business in the Arts programme.

This recent and profitable symbiosis of the arts and business does not excuse the taxpayer from a civic duty to support the arts. Business naturally prefers to sponsor a single spectacular production rather than the routine maintenance of the infrastructure. Business sponsorship is by nature fickle, and goes for glamour; the state must always be there to be faithful, to preserve the unglamorous core of the heritage.

The United Kingdom has achieved a good balance here. In the rest of Europe there are huge subsidies for the arts from the state. In the United States there is very little direct subsidy. Britain has the best mixed arts economy. We should be proud of it, and encourage it to carry on that way.

Church attitude to divorcees

From the Reverend Gavin R. P. Ashenden

Sir, The remarriage of the Princess Royal has reopened the question of how the Church of England responds to divorcees.

Tony Highton writes ("Divorce and the church", December 9) in defence of the strict application of the official line that "the church is compassionate in seeking to uphold the institution" of marriage.

If the New Testament offered a simple codified form of social morality, it might be clear that our obligation was to take such a stance. But it doesn't. Consequently ethical questions are amongst the most vexed we have to consider.

In the case of the princess, the Church is being invited either to settle for a role which is meant to uphold crumbling social standards, or to meet people where they actually find themselves to be. When divorcees present themselves to the Church for remarriage they interpret their treatment as a reflection on whether or not they are acceptable to God in their pain and sense of failure.

Quantifying fault is usually something no one is capable of. The "law" has backed off that, and so ought we.

The Church does not have the power to uphold social standards, and, even if it did, it isn't clear that that should be its role, though many, not least some of our more senior politicians, have clamoured for it to act like a social policeman when it suits a particular need.

It does have the power to offer support in an attempt to rebuild lives; to rekindle hope in those who have experienced marital breakdown; to provide forgiveness and acceptance. That is most effectively achieved by bringing fractured lives and new promises to God afresh in church.

That as much as anything else I can think of lies at the heart of Christianity. Perhaps the Church of England can dare to attempt to offer that. I am only sorry, and rather ashamed, that it is not being offered to the Princess Royal.

Yours sincerely,
GAVIN ASHENDEN
(Chaplain), The University of Sussex,
Meeting House, Falmer,
Brighton, East Sussex.
December 9.

Royal separation

From Miss Flora Fraser

Sir, Lord Blake correctly points out (letter, December 10) that the wife of the Prince of Wales on his accession to the throne automatically becomes queen. But there is an important distinction to be drawn between becoming queen and being crowned queen.

The coronation of a queen consort lies in the gift of the king, her husband. The Privy Council so held in July 1821, refusing Queen Caroline's application that she was entitled to be crowned as of right.

Yours faithfully,
FLORA FRASER,
8 Flanders Mansions,
Flanders Road, W4.
December 10.

From Mr John Walker

Sir, The sad separation of the Prince and Princess of Wales completes the transformation of our monarchy into a hereditary presidency in which:

1. The monarch/president pays taxes.
2. The Civil List "family" is reduced to a minimum core of active working members.
3. Membership of that core family is "voluntary" by virtue of opting out to pursue a non-royal life and career (e.g. Lord Linley) or of exclusion for non-royal conduct (e.g. the Duchess of York).
4. The monarch/president pays for the privilege (maybe rebuilding Windsor Castle).
5. The monarch/president may choose whether or not to have a crowned consort, and if so whom.

Shouldn't we, the people, have a say in whether or not we want this?

Yours faithfully,
J. S. WALKER,
Shepherd's Pasture,
3 Chancery Close, Lincoln.
December 11.

From Mrs Doreen Davies

Sir, The continuing publicity over the troubles of the royal family is little more than a screen, masking the far more real and important matters of a country in recession and facing a dubious future in Europe.

I do not want a charter, just a secure future for my family, the country and what remains of our royal family.

Yours sincerely,
D. DAVIES,
Croft Cottage,
Moberley, Cheshire.
December 10.

From Mr Cyril Sherwood

Sir, How would our interest, as individuals or as members of the public, have been harmed if we had known nothing of marital difficulties until Mr Major's announcement?

Yours faithfully,
C. SHERWOOD,
Arundel Lodge, 271 Swalecley Road,
Ickenham, Middlesex.
December 10.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

1 Pennington Street, London E1 9QN Telephone 071-782 5000

Urban uniformity and the landlord

From Mr Martin Bradshaw

Sir, Mr Michael Cudlipp, director of the Georgian Group (letter, December 2), is right to express concern at the threat to the nation's architectural heritage which would occur with the loss of estate management of the landed estates.

However, to suggest that the single answer to maintaining the appearance of these areas and their character lies through landlord control is surely questionable.

Of course, many of the estates have exercised their powers positively, but others have not. The exercise of their powers is discretionary to secure the interests of the estate; it is not necessarily in the wider public interest.

If the country believes that the character of these areas should be maintained, then the proper route lies not through controlling the ownership of the property, with its implications of continued and unjustified unfranchised leaseholds, but through responsible control exercised for the whole community through the Town and Country Planning Acts.

The Georgian Group is right to say that the existing powers with respect to listed buildings and conservation areas require strengthening. In particular, the government can do much to make it easier for local authorities to secure "directions" under article 4 of the general development order, made under the Town and Country Planning Act 1990.

In this specific area would bring under planning control many changes to buildings which are currently subject to the discretion of landlords, but which do not ordinarily require planning permission.

Respectful of the financial interests of landlords and their leaseholders, which the Housing and Urban Development Bill seeks to address, it is right that there should be a debate about the balance between those conservation powers which should rest with the community through the planning system and those which should rest with landlords.

Yours sincerely,
MARTIN BRADSHAW
(Senior Vice-President),
The Royal Town Planning Institute,
26 Portland Place, W1.
December 2.

From Mrs Joan South

Sir, Mr Cudlipp is out of touch. There is nothing new about leasehold enfranchisement, and the estates he is talking about have been long eroded by earlier legislation without any of the collapse of uniformity of external appearance that he predicts.

More seriously, Mr Cudlipp is completely silent about the management schemes incorporated in the 1967 Leasehold Reform Act (section 19) and repeated — and indeed extended — in the present Bill. Estate management in respect of estates that can claim to be "well-managed" will carry on in exactly the same way as

In good voice

From Mr Graeme E. Hall

Sir, I cannot agree with the sentiments expressed by Hazel R. Morgan (letter, December 5) that Gilbert and Sullivan operas place a strain on the vocal technique of young school singers. If the rehearsals and coaching for the operas are handled with care, such productions can do much to help the development of the voice, not to mention the gains for character enhancement and general confidence.

I have produced many school operas over a period of 25 years and many pupils who took lead character parts ended up studying at one of our leading music establishments.

Yours faithfully,
GRAEME E. HALL,
Cherry Tree House,
Hacheston,
Woodbridge, Suffolk.
December 7.

From Mr Christopher W. Redwood

Sir, I disagree with Miss Morgan's suggestion that Gilbert and Sullivan operas were "written for mature singers"; they were written for singing

A case for severity

From Professor and Dr O. P. Gray

Sir, The reason for the reduction of a father's life sentence for "monstrous" sex offences against his daughter by the Court of Appeal (report, December 5) appears to be that this behaviour by parents is almost "run of the mill". Is not this the very reason why the law should take the most serious view of such actions and pass its most severe judgments upon the perpetrators, thereby joining others in society who are trying to stamp out this most terrifying evil?

Yours faithfully,
PETER GRAY
(Professor emeritus of child health),
MARION F. GRAY,
Merchaviah,
396 Cynedon Road, Cardiff.
December 5.

Letters to the editor that are intended for publication should carry a daytime telephone number. They may be sent to a fax number — 071-782 5046.

before, funded by the residents under statutory regulation.

What these areas will not have to contend with in the future is the inexorable deterioration of historic fabric that is the corollary of the wasting lease and the sad cycle of periodic gutting that it sets in train. I am afraid that closer inspection of Mr Cudlipp's admired leasehold houses would reveal a good modicum of breeze-block construction behind the uniform facades.

Yours faithfully,
JOAN SOUTH
(Campaign Co-ordinator,
Leasehold Enfranchisement
Association),
26 Upper Phillimore Gardens,
Kensington, W8.
December 2.

From Mrs T. A. Mansfield

Sir, Many of London's private ground landlords at the turn of the century demolished substantial areas of their estates containing fine Georgian architecture, replacing them with larger houses and mansion blocks of flats which could command higher rents. They did not necessarily finance the construction of such developments.

Postwar conservation legislation has prevented this pattern being repeated, though regrettably it persists as regards the often total demolition, excluding facades, of many Regency and Georgian buildings, again to maximise their financial return.

In countries such as France, Spain and Italy, where the injustices of leasehold tenure were abolished decades ago, much of the historic fabric of the cities has been successfully preserved. Leasehold enfranchisement will belatedly entrust the future preservation of these estates to home owners, who have invested greatly in their preservation.

Yours faithfully,
T. A. MANSFIELD,
68 Cadogan Place, SW1.
December 2.

From Miss Margaret Allen

Sir, Here in Chelsea, during the mid-1970s, the Church Commissioners disposed of whole streets of properties to tenants for whom the temptation was to leave redecoration and maintenance under full repairing leases until the last possible moment. As a result, many of these streets acquired a tired and unkempt look.

Times have changed. Many of the properties have now come onto the freehold market and the new freeholders have maintained and even enhanced their quality, returning them to their former glory. That is why so much of Chelsea is now a pleasure to walk around, a joy to live in and a model for other inner-city areas.

Yours faithfully,
MARGARET ALLEN,
116 Cheyne Walk,
Chelsea, SW10.
December 4.

actors, such as appear in West End musicals today.

The one exception to this was when a part was written for a specially imported singer, such as Elsie in *The Yeomen of the Guard*.

In my days as a director of music, I frequently and successfully mounted school performances of Gilbert and Sullivan. I have no reason to think that they ever did any harm to the pupils' voices; one of my former pupils, who made his first singing appearance as the Judge in *Trial by Jury*, is now a professional opera singer.

The sad fact is that there is so little singing going on in schools today that any attempt to discourage schools from mounting performances of operas with which the children can identify is to be deplored.

Many of them find this the ideal bridge between pop music and the classics.

Yours faithfully,
CHRISTOPHER W. REDWOOD,
Hunters Farm,
31/33 Main Road,
Wilford,
Nottingham.
December 7.

Cheaper insurance

From Mr J. P. Roland and Mr M. J. Hall

Sir, Bernard Levin ("Making do on £6 million a year", December 3) is wide of the mark in his attack on Peter Wood, as is made clear in your Business News report the following day.

Why didn't he praise him for recreating an insurance market cutting out the cost of the intermediary? Mr Wood has achieved a difficult double act of helping the consumer and at the same time producing a profit for himself and his company.

While we wholeheartedly agreed with Mr Levin on the legacy left by Geraint Evans, the majority of Mr Wood's customers would prefer the cheaper insurance offered by his company.

Yours sincerely,
JOHN ROLAND,
MICHAEL HALL,
Associates House,
Datchet Road,
Windsor, Berkshire.
December 4.

Suitable help for gifted children

From Mr John Walker

Sir, I was directly responsible for referring Nicholas MacMahon, the gifted four-year-old, to his new tutor, Valsa Koshy of the West London Institute, for help (report, December 4). Over the last few years some 5,000 families have sought my society's advice as to how to find suitable education for their very able children.

From this total about 300 have warranted very special consideration. Nicholas, on our preliminary assessment, would appear to need consideration at the top end of this group for his intellectual capabilities.

All children should have the chance of a happy and fulfilled childhood. This does not necessarily arise from a basis of "socialisation" but will come from the satisfaction of their special intellectual needs, which can then be melded into a social context.

In the course of trying to place many intellectually gifted children in schools I have found in most that there is little real understanding of the very special approach required if the total needs of this type of child are to be met.

The major problem for these children is that they do not fit or adapt easily to the standard mould. Society, in its growing complexity, needs them to mature and so become adults able and willing to contribute to its development, not turned into "British Standard" schoolchildren.

Yours faithfully,
JOHN WALKER (Chairman,
The Support Society for
Children of High Intelligence),
7 Gorse Hill, Ashton under Hill,
Evesham, Worcestershire.
December 4.

From the Director of the British Chess Federation

Sir, I have read the concern expressed over four-year-old Nicholas MacMahon with interest. May I commend the chess world to parents whose children show exceptional early intellectual development? There is no ageism and we are well used to helping players develop at their own pace without ill-conceived regard to their background.

In our experience, away from the game, child prodigies have been able to develop appropriate social relationships with other people, who have no hang-ups or fears, existing as they do in a culture which must accept that there is only one world champion, but others have their worth.

Yours faithfully,
S. REUBEN, Director,
The British Chess Federation,
11 Haversham Close,
Twickenham, Middlesex.
December 4.

'Mirror' and Hattersley

From the Editor of the Daily Mirror

Sir, Roy Hattersley ("A paper that rarely sees red", Media, December 9) produced no evidence of a weakening of either the *Daily Mirror's* crusading spirit or of its full-blown commitment to securing a Labour government. Why? Because it has not happened and never will.

Instead he indulged in the kind of cheap speculation which he would be the first to criticise. Coming from him made it all the more absurd.

The *Daily Mirror* did more for Labour than did Mr Hattersley's term as the party's deputy leader. We will continue the fight long after he has given up.

Yours faithfully,
DAVID BANKS,
Editor, *Daily Mirror*,
Holborn Circus, EC1.
December 10.

Dutch connections

From Mr E. Brouwer

Sir, The name of the Dutch town Maastricht should be pronounced with the accent on "trich", sounding like Macheth, not master. The correct stress on the name of the Dutch EC commissioner, Frans Andriessen, should be like ancestry, not ambition.

Almost all politicians and TV presenters get this consistently wrong. Use of the correct pronunciation will not interfere with British sovereignty. It could even be a tiny positive step towards one Europe.

Yours faithfully,
E. BROUWER,
Howick Farm, Balls Cross,
Petworth, West Sussex.

Home for summits

From Mr A. E. L. Parnis

Sir, You report (December 8) that the Edinburgh summit is costing £15 million. No doubt other such summits in other countries have cost their citizens large amounts.

The Royal Show, after many years of moving around the country, eventually settled down at Stoneleigh. Would it not be better, and more economical, if a permanent site were found for such gatherings, in some EC country?

I am etc.,
A. E. L. PARNIS,
4 Jordan Close,
Kenilworth, Warwickshire.

BARON GEOFFROY CHODRON DE COURCEL

Recently he and Ray Ashton, his successor at Hammer, were involved in a television documentary, *Graespaint and Gore*, about their joint contribution to British cinema. Phil Leakey is survived by his son Peter.

and took me with him on
duced to General Bertrand
the other passengers; after
minutes in the ward-room,
announced to be on deck,
up. I approached him and
did the same; he asked me
good watchmakers in the
ere was a very good one, a
o is also a very respectable
quested me to take his
they were out of repair; one
repeater, the other a silver
ical; the latter, he says he
m in his carriage.



BUSINESS 17-26

Profile: star of the corporate twilight zone



FOOTBALL 30

Serious business as Dalglish returns to Anfield



TENNIS 27

The legacy left by McEnroe's stormy career

WEEKEND SPORTING FIXTURES
PAGE 28

THE TIMES

2

SATURDAY DECEMBER 12 1992

WEEKEND MONEY

POOR RATES

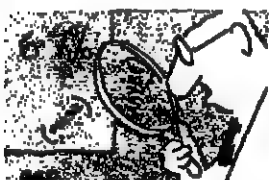


Some children's building society accounts are paying a miserly 1 per cent gross and adult accounts offer better rates
Page 22

FALSE NOTES

Shoppers must be on their guard against counterfeit banknotes this Christmas when stores are busy
Page 23

SMALL PRINT



Guarantees are only as good as the small print even if the institutions giving them are trustworthy
Letters, page 24

SINKING



Paul Diggins has been fighting Sun Alliance over a subsidiary claim on his house for six years and could face a legal bill of £400,000
Page 21

THE POUND

US dollar 1.5600 (-0.0017)
German mark 2.4586 (+0.0028)
Exchange index 80.2 (same)
Bank of England official close (4pm)

STOCK MARKET

FT 30 share 2062.8 (-1.4)
FT-SE 100 2716.2 (-10.3)
New York Dow Jones 3303.81 (-8.38)
Tokyo Nikkei Ave 17441.02 (-60.28)

INTEREST RATES

London: Bank Base: 7%
3-month interbank: 7 1/4-7 1/2%
3-month eligible bills: 6 1/4-6 1/2%
US: Prime Rate: 6%
Federal Funds: 2 1/4-2 1/2%
3-month Treasury Bills: 3.25-3.28%
30-year bonds: 10 1/2-10 3/4%

CURRENCIES

London: New York
C: \$1.5600
C: DM1.5765
C: Sfr1.4065
C: FF6.3800
C: Yen123.83
C: Index: 65.1
ECU: £0.798155
SDR: £0.896642
C: ECU1.115272
London Foreign market close

GOLD

London Fixing:
AM \$334.20 PM \$335.10
Close \$334.70-335.10
\$214.50-215.00
New York:
Comex \$ 334.85-335.15

NORTH SEA OIL

Brent (Jan) ... \$18.15/bbl (\$18.25)

RETAIL PRICES

RPI: 130.7 November (1897-100)
* Denotes midday trading price

Klöckner's fall points up steel crisis in Europe

FROM WOLFGANG MÜNCHAU
IN DUISBURG

KLÖCKNER-Werke, one of Germany's oldest steel companies, has sought protection from its creditors in an act of desperation that highlights the abyss faced by the steel industry throughout Europe.

Klöckner said the decision would trigger a "restructuring of cards" in Europe's steel industry, indicating that its steel mills are now up for sale. The most likely suitor is the Dutch company Hoogovens, although Italy's Ilva is also thought to be a possible buyer. Hans Christoph von Rohr, Klöckner's management board chairman, said the situation would constitute "a new beginning" for the company. He added that Klöckner would regard itself as an "equal partner" during forthcoming merger talks and would not allow itself to be pushed into a corner.

He also said that the appli-

■ Mills will be sold and cross-border partnerships forged after Klöckner, the German steel group, sought protection from its creditors in "a new beginning"

cation for protection from creditors was limited to the holding group and its two steelmaking subsidiaries, Klöckner Stahl and Edelstahl. The procedure forms a crucial part of Germany's bankruptcy law and is to some degree comparable to America's chapter 11 provisions. In that it seeks to ensure a company's survival at the expense of its creditors.

Klöckner said it sought to write off about DM 1.5 billion out of a total debt of DM 2.7 billion, leaving creditors with only about 40 per cent of their original claims.

Deutsche Bank, which recently put together a rescue package for the company, is among the biggest creditors. Its shares fell sharply in

Frankfurt, closing DM 14 lower at DM 627.50. Shares in Klöckner were suspended but trading is expected to resume on Monday.

Dr von Rohr blamed the decision to seek protection from creditors on the worsening situation in Europe's steel industry, which is beset by overcapacity and falling prices. He also blamed the German government's increasingly controversial attempts to prop up the domestic coal industry.

Like other German steel-makers, Klöckner is compelled to buy local coal from the Ruhr at an estimated extra cost to the company of DM 90 million a year, almost half its 1992 steel-related losses. Furthermore, Klöckner is no longer in a position to service its burgeoning debt mountain.

Dr von Rohr said that protection from creditors did not in itself involve job cuts. But the company is engaged in a wide-ranging efficiency drive, which will involve about 2,000 job cuts out of a steel workforce of 8,000 at its two mills in Bremen and Osnabrück, both in northern Germany.

At a hastily convened press conference, Dr von Rohr tried to put some gloss on the news, which he admitted would "shock at first sight". He said, however: "It is also a signal, not of a collapse, but of a new beginning." He said the alternative course of pursuing an ordinary bankruptcy procedure would have been "catastrophic" for the company. He was almost certain that the procedure would succeed within the envisaged time-scale of four to six months.

Klöckner's remaining domestic and foreign companies are not affected by the procedure. They include KMM, the profitable machine tools and plastics subsidiary, which accounts for two thirds of Klöckner's DM 7.1 billion turnover.

Dr von Rohr said the company's operating losses in steel would amount to about DM 200 million this year, compared with DM 35 million in 1991. Other businesses are expected to have made a profit of DM 65 million.

The announcement from Klöckner came only a few days after the completion of Krupp's takeover of Hoesch, another Ruhr steelmaker. The concentration process in the industry comes amid growing concern about over-capacity and falling prices throughout Europe. Other European steelmakers, including British Steel, have also been hit.

Farewell to steel, page 18
Tempus, page 19

Hoogovens tipped as likely buyer

BY ROSS TIEMAN, INDUSTRIAL CORRESPONDENT

HOOGOVENS, the Dutch metals producer, is expected to buy the Klöckner steel business, shut down liquid steel production, and integrate the downstream operations with its own steel plant.

That would enable Hoogovens to increase utilisation of its own facilities, assist profitability, and give a valuable link with Japanese and Finnish partners that are providing Klöckner with technical assistance to build a galvanising works at Bremen. Semi-finished steel could be supplied to Bremen from The Netherlands.

Hoogovens would almost certainly have access to the £731 million EC restructuring fund to provide supplementary redundancy payments to the 50,000 workers the commission believes should leave the industry.

A takeover by Hoogovens would provide a satisfactory outcome for British Steel, which rejected the option of buying the entire Klöckner steel-making business after discussions almost three years ago. Instead, the British firm settled for the purchase of Klöckner's Mannstadt division in mid-1990.

That gave Brian Moffat, British Steel's chief executive, specialised sections and tubes business with capacity of more than 300,000 tonnes a year. According to British Steel, the surplus of liquid steel production capacity across Europe now amounts to about 30 million tonnes. Steel prices have collapsed.

See from British Steel's headquarters in London, the

withdrawal of Klöckner's 3.2 million tonnes of capacity would be a useful, although

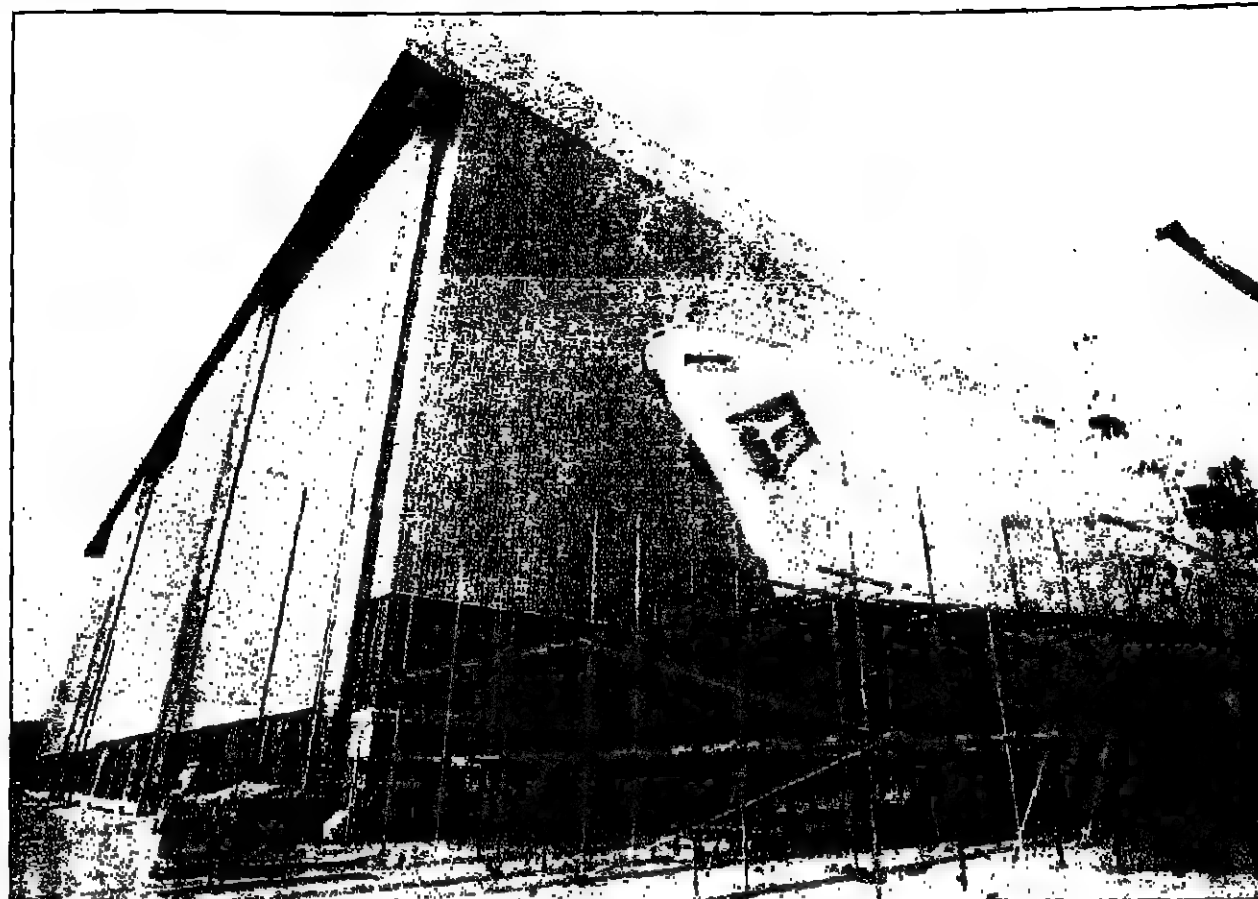


Moffat seeking expansion

inadequate start. Ideally, the company would like to see a rash of other European plant closures, flagged up no later than next month.

Mr Moffat and his colleagues are understood to believe the long-overdue restructuring of Europe's steel industry could provide them with opportunities. British Steel has been battling for more than five years, with very limited success, to expand overseas.

The company lost £51 million in the half year to October 3, passed its dividend, and saw borrowings rise to almost £200 million. However, British Steel is the second most efficient producer in Europe, and ranks fourth largest in the world. The first-half loss was struck after a £100 million charge for the closure the Ravenscraig works.



Inflation could fall below 2% early in the new year

BY JANET BUSH, ECONOMICS CORRESPONDENT

THE headline rate of retail price inflation is likely to fall even further over the next few months as the effect of lower mortgage rates feeds through. Some economists predict that the RPI could even drop below 2 per cent in early 1993.

But the underlying rate of inflation, the measure now targeted by the government, should start to rise again as the effects of sterling's devaluation pushes up import prices. Private economists expect the underlying rate to rise to the top of its 1 per cent to 4 per cent official target range during next year.

In November, the headline retail price index fell to 3 per cent from 3.6 per cent in October, taking it to the lowest level since October 1986. The Central Statistical Office said it estimated that cuts of about 1.75 percentage points in mortgage rates have yet to feed through to the headline figure

and that this could depress the index by another 1 per cent.

The underlying rate fell to 3.6 per cent in November from 3.8 per cent the previous month. This is the lowest level since February 1988. Food prices grew at the lowest rate since May 1983.

The CSO said sterling's devaluation did not appear to have had much impact so far on underlying retail price inflation although, as the Treasury pointed out in its *Monthly Monetary Report*, there has been a pick-up in import prices and producer input price inflation.

Peter Warburton, of Robert Fleming, said the first real impact of sterling's devaluation would be felt in January. UK gilts surged by as much as a full point in reaction to the inflation figures, only to be knocked back about half a point after news that the Bank of England will sell £700

million in new tranches of existing bonds next week. Sterling recovered from an early fall to close almost unchanged at DM2.4550.

There was more evidence of an upturn in America with retail sales rising 0.4 per cent in November. Inflation remained subdued with consumer prices up only 0.2 per cent in contrast, Germany saw a 2 per cent decline in retail sales in the latest month.

In spite of this, the dollar failed to make much headway against the mark, which saw inflows from weaker currencies in the exchange-rate mechanism. Several European central banks spent what were believed to be considerable sums supporting the French franc, the Danish krone and the Irish punt on the first day of the Edinburgh EC summit.

Six-year low, page 1

UBS buys City complex for £200m debt write-off

BY OUR CITY STAFF

UNION Bank of Switzerland is forgiving £200 million of debt due from Rosehaugh Stanhope Developments, builder of phase three of the City's Broadgate development. In return for possession of the buildings for a nominal sum.

Rosehaugh Stanhope is jointly owned by Rosehaugh, which called in receivers last week, and Stanhope Properties. The venture, with debts of £1.25 billion, recently extended its banking arrangements for five years.

Phase three of Broadgate occupies 390,000 square feet and includes the UBS and UBS Phillips & Drew offices at

100 Liverpool Street. It is understood that the deal with Rosehaugh Stanhope also covers rental income from retail premises under the offices and substantial tax losses built up in the Broadgate Phase Three company, known as BP3. BP3 suffered a net loss of £17.8 million in the year to June 1991, on net assets of £15.1 million.

Stanhope shares were unchanged at 15p. Stuart Lipton, Stanhope chief executive, said: "Following our recent signing of a five-year extension to RHSD's banking arrangements, the sale of BP3 is further evidence of the stability of the group."

Small company crusaders target Stock Exchange

BY MARTIN WALLER
DEPUTY CITY EDITOR

A CRUSADE on behalf of smaller companies, threatened by the increasing unwillingness of big securities firms to trade in their stocks, has been launched by a new City ginger group. Taking an inevitable pole position at the City Group for Smaller Companies (CISCO) is that doyen of the smaller company sector, Brian Winterlood, of Winterlood Securities. Chairing the group is Andrew Beeson of Beeson Gregory.

He estimates that more than 1,500 of the 2,100 listed companies on the London market fall into the smaller companies category, with a market value of less than £50 million, and says they are getting a raw deal from the City. CISCO has already approached Sir Andrew Hugh



Come and join us: Marc Cramsie of Singer & Friedlander, left, watches Brian Winterlood make a point yesterday

Smith, chairman of the Stock Exchange, whose response Mr Beeson described as "positive". He added: "This hasn't been set up to bash the Stock Exchange over the head." The group believes that if the stock market as currently constituted is unable to service the mass of companies that wish their shares to be traded there, the job must be

done in another way. "We're not going to declare UDL," said Mr Beeson. But there is plenty of muttering about a London equivalent of Nasdaq, the parallel market that operates on Wall Street.

CISCO is starting from a small base. Seventeen institutions, including brokers, solicitors, accountants, investing institutions and even a brace of City public relations firms, have each paid out £500 to cover initial overheads. Another 200 potential members have been approached, and more than half had indicated an interest, said Mr Beeson.

Already on board are 31, the venture capital group, and Smith New Court, the broker, which has been expanding its coverage of the smaller companies sector as rivals have been pulling out. CISCO is concerned at the lack of

adequate dealing facilities for less liquid securities and the expected demise of the USM, one-time kindergarten to the full market. It is worried about the possible fragmentation of markets, leading to a superfluity of rival dealing systems, and the pending criminal justice bill, which it says could criminalise some dealers in smaller companies where there is a limited market. Mr Beeson wrote to John Major a month ago on the last topic but concedes that the prime minister may have had rather more occupying his mind since.

Mr Winterlood said that without an effective mechanism to allow smaller companies to come to the market, the public were losing out to the institutions, and only allowed to clamber on board later on. "By then a lot of the cream has gone," he added.

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Germany's powerhouse says farewell to steel



Rise and fall: rolled steel at Hoesch, of Dortmund, in the 1960s. The company has now been taken over

Three types of jobs have dominated the Ruhr district, Germany's industrial powerhouse, throughout the 20th century: coalminers in the early part of the century, steelworkers after the second world war and, more recently, insolvency experts.

Since yesterday, the latter have been busy again in Duisburg, a town at the confluence of the rivers Rhine and Ruhr, where Klöckner, one of the oldest names in German steel production, became the most prominent victim of Europe's steel crisis.

Klöckner has long ceased making steel on the Ruhr, preferring cheaper locations in the north, but its name is perhaps more closely linked than any other with the history of an industry which produced the steel not only for Germany's motor cars but also, of course, for Hitler's weapons.

The demise of Klöckner Steel is the latest, and seemingly most daunting, symbol of the decline of an industry, and an area, where too many goods were produced at uncompetitive prices. Before

Klöckner there were many more that had been forced to face up to reality.

There was Hoesch, in Dortmund. Until the 1970s, Hoesch was the big bad giant that dominated local commerce and politics. It even managed to discourage other potential investors in the area for fear of competition in the labour market. In the early 1980s, Hoesch was cut down in size, but that came too late to save the company's independence. This month, it finally agreed to a takeover by Krupp, its arch-rival from Essen.

It was only in deference to local anxieties, and demands from local politicians, that Krupp decided to leave the headquarters of two divisions in Dortmund.

Only Krupp and Thyssen — the largest German steel-maker, with its base in Düsseldorf — are left intact. But Thyssen, too, has problems. In

October, the company announced drastic cuts in output and employment.

The international steel crisis is only partly to blame for the demise of the Ruhr steel industry. There are many home-made reasons as well. German companies such as Klöckner were forced to buy locally produced coal at premium rates under a government-enforced contract. Klöckner claims this premium accounts for half its losses. It is ironic that the futile attempt to prop up the coal industry has accelerated the death of steel.

Both serve as rose-coloured symbols of the Ruhr's industrial past. For employees, however, the coal mines and steel mills had been no more than a means of survival. There was never anything romantic about them, except with hindsight and in the safe knowledge

that most of them are gone for good. Meanwhile, the people of the Ruhr have done belatedly what others did ten or 20 years ago.

Even Dortmund has reluctantly changed its industrial structure by allowing in, and even encouraging, small to medium-sized companies in all sectors of industry, from all parts of the country. For a decade, the town has had one of the highest unemployment rates in the country.

Now, most of the chimneys are gone, the air is clean and so is the Ruhr itself, which now ranks among Germany's least polluted rivers.

Brussels is unfairly propping up ailing state enterprises to the detriment of the private sector, according to the German Steel Federation (Tom Walker writes).

John Lewis sees signs of Christmas pick-up

JOHN Lewis Partnership, the privately owned retailing group, said latest weekly sales figures showed total sales in the week to December 5 were down 1 per cent on the same week last year. But the company said it found evidence that Christmas demand was starting to pick up. The week began in a subdued manner, said the company, with the first day of the month failing to deliver the expected boost to sales, but Saturday introduced a better momentum. Sales at its department stores were 1 per cent down on last year, while food store sales were 0.9 per cent lower.

The company said sales of video games, personal computers and printers underpinned another major advance from electronics goods. But fashion sales were mixed, with menswear and children's wear producing the best results in the week. "There is much left to play for and the next two to three weeks will be crucial," the company said. The group's figures show that in 1991 Christmas sales peaked in the week just before Christmas day, which fell on a Wednesday. The company expects a similar pattern this year, with Christmas day falling on Friday giving people four full shopping days in the week before December 25.

Wassall steps up fight

WASSALL's latest circular to Evode shareholders, entitled "The case for change", urges them to accept its 80p-a-share bid. Evode has dubbed it "The case for short change". Evode's shares yesterday stood at 94p. In its circular, Wassall asserts that Evode is "extremely close to breaching another covenant which could trigger immediate redemption of Evode's US redeemable preference shares". Evode yesterday denied this. The first closing date is next Thursday.

Hillsdown sells beds

HILLSDOWN, the food group, has sold its bedding interests for £17 million in cash, leaving a profit on the book value of around £14 million. The bedding operations have been bought by Cauval Industrie SA, a French company. The interests include Sleepzee, in Britain, and Compagnie Continentale Simmons SA, in France, and Compagnie Italiana Simmons SpA, in Italy. The company says it is another step in concentrating on core activities.

Osborne & Little slides

OSBORNE & Little, the wallpaper and fabrics group chaired by Sir Peter Osborne, right, swung into loss in the six months to end-September. Osborne lost £802,000 pre-tax compared with a £384,000 profit a year earlier. The interim dividend is held at 2p.



Albion moves ahead

SHARES in Albion, the Belfast clothing manufacturer, leapt 24p to 75p after it reported a pre-tax profit increase from £620,256 to £773,937 in the year to end-September. The final dividend of 1.8p makes 3p, compared with a 2.5p total last year. Albion, which sells menswear to Littlewoods and Burton, reported improved demand and expressed "quiet confidence". Turnover rose to £15.6 million from £13.6 million last year.

Southern Radio recovers

MERGING with Radio South has helped Southern Radio back into the black. Pre-tax profit for the year to September was £774,000, compared with a £363,000 loss in the previous 12 months. Trading results for Radio South are included from last December. The recession affected revenue badly in August and September but the first two months of the current financial year have been better than a year ago. A final dividend of 0.794p is proposed.

AH Ball pegs payout

OPERATING profits at AH Ball are unlikely to be higher in the year to March than the £783,000 achieved in 1991-2, the company said. It reported a fall in the interim pre-tax figure from £524,000 to £407,000. The interim dividend stays at 2.2p. The shares fell 10p to 125p. The board said prospects for the remainder of the year were uncertain. Benefits from the acquisition of KD are unlikely to become fully apparent during the current year.

Parkland stays in red

THE devaluation of sterling will help Parkland Textile's export initiative, Denis Greenwood, chairman, said after announcing a £309,000 loss in the half year to August. A £1.37 million loss was made in the previous first half. Mr Greenwood said the home market would benefit from the increased costs of imports, but added: "We do not foresee any significant improvement in the retail sector for some time and any recovery will be achieved gradually."

Corporate mood in Japan slumps to 17-year low

FROM REUTERS IN TOKYO

JAPANESE corporate confidence plunged new depths in November. It fell to its lowest since 1975, when the economy was hit by soaring oil prices, a survey by Japan's central bank shows.

The quarterly report, known as the *tanken*, contained a litany of gloomy numbers, reflecting a downturn that has lasted almost two years. Economists are divided, however, over what the statistics suggest for the future. James Vestal, an economist at Barclays de Zoete Wedd Securities (Japan), said: "The survey... tells us what we already know — that the economy is doing badly now."

The *tanken* showed that corporate sentiment in November plunged from already

■ The Japanese economy is expected to touch bottom early in 1993 and pressure is growing on the government to loosen credit and get things moving again

low levels. The so-called "diffusion index" for big manufacturers, a key gauge of business sentiment, dropped to minus 44, from minus 37 in August.

That meant November sentiment was worse than in 1987, when Japan suffered from the yen's rise, but better than in August 1975, when the economy was suffering from higher oil prices.

The November survey shows that companies have scaled back capital spending plans: they forecast a 4.7 per cent cut in the year to March 31, 1993, against an August

forecast of a 2.8 per cent fall and a 7.7 per cent rise in 1991-2.

Sales by manufacturing companies were expected to fall by 1.4 per cent in 1992-3 after a 1 per cent rise a year ago, the first such fall since 1987. Sales by non-manufacturers will drop 2 per cent after a 1991-2 drop of 0.2 per cent.

Manufacturing profits will be 25.5 per cent lower in 1992-3 than a year earlier; non-manufacturing profits, excluding utilities, will fall by 19.3 per cent.

Manufacturers made some progress in reducing excess inventories: the index showed the excess dropping to 37 from 38, its first decline during the current economic downturn.

Economists differed in their interpretations of the data. Some echoed a growing consensus that the economy was likely to touch bottom early in 1993, as long as the authorities loosened credit and pressed open government coffers to get things going.

Masaru Takagi, chief economist at Fuji Research Institute, said: "Now is the darkest period. Things are very bad now but the economy will bottom out in the January-June quarter, provided the Bank of Japan lowers the discount rate and the budget for the year starting April 1 is stimulative. Otherwise, there is danger of a double dip."

Kagehide Kaku, director of the Bank of Japan's research and statistics department, told reporters that Japan's industrial output was expected to recover in the first quarter of 1993. But he cautioned that recovery was likely to be slow.



Holding less: Lord Hanson has cut his stake by 2.5 million Hanson shares

Hanson takes second successive cut in pay

By COLIN CAMPBELL

LORD Hanson's emoluments as chairman of the industrial group that bears his name fell by £30,000, the second successive annual reduction, to £135 million — equivalent to £3,698.63 a day, in the year ended September 30.

Hanson's annual report shows that Lord Hanson held 6 million shares out of an issued capital of 4.82 billion shares on October 1. On May 19, Lord Hanson reduced his stake from 8.549 million shares through the sale of 2.5 million shares at 232p. Four other directors also effected share sales. Lord Hanson's share sale was for "purposes of long-term family financial planning and providing tax funds".

Hanson executive directors participate in a graduated performance-linked incentive

Lloyd's wins court case in America

THE Corporation of Lloyd's has won a victory in its battle with American names who are suing the insurance market after suffering large underwriting losses (Sarah Bagnall writes). However, the names are likely to try a different tactic to recover their losses.

The US Supreme Court rejected a petition from Ronald Riley, a name who sought to have the case against Lloyd's heard in US courts.

The Supreme Court ruled that Mr Riley had to abide by his agreements and pointed out that he "could seek redress in the English courts", which had long been recognised as fair and neutral forums.

American names are said to be considering filing for bankruptcy, with the aim of forcing Lloyd's to appear in American courts.

BRITISH FUNDS

GOVERNMENT securities benefited from better than expected inflation figures, which revived hope of a cut in base rates. The Bank of England took full advantage to issue £700 million of existing stock, including £100 million of Treasury 2002-06, £250 million of Treasury 9 per cent 2008 and £350 million of Treasury 9 per cent 2012.

The move came as no

surprise to the market, which has held up well this week in spite of persistent profit taking, as fund managers continued to balance their positions ahead of the year end.

The fall in the inflation level to its lowest level for six years revived hopes that the Chancellor may decide to move early to reduce base rates from 7 per cent. Brokers said this argument may be backed up

next week by manufacturing output figures. But prices closed below their best. On the futures market, the March series long gilt touched £100 1/2 before finishing 19 ticks better at £99 3/4. On the cash market, shorts rose by around 1/4 reducing five-year yields by six basis points, while longs firmed 1/4 leaving the yield four basis points lower.

Efta limits Swiss vote damage

FROM COLIN NARBROUGH IN GENEVA

MINISTERS of the European Free Trade Association (Efta) have moved fast to limit the damage that last Sunday's Swiss referendum decision has wrought on economic integration in Europe. Switzerland voted with a firm "no" to the European economic area (EEA), which was intended to link the seven Efta countries — Austria, Switzerland and the five Nordic states — with the European Community in a single market of 380 million people.

In a special session in Geneva yesterday, Efta trade ministers decided to take immediate steps to draft a protocol to the EEA treaty that would allow all Efta countries, except Switzerland, to go ahead with implementation of the huge market in the first half of next year.

But the ministers clearly remained concerned that the Swiss vote was yet another reflection of the dissatisfaction across Europe with the pace of economic change and the stance taken by governments.

The EEA deal, agreed with the European Community in April, was supposed to have come into force on January 1 to coincide with the Commu-



Salolainen: clear message

nity's single market programme. But the Swiss vote makes this impossible and requires technical changes to the EEA agreement before it can now take effect.

Swiss economists estimate that the referendum decision will mean that Switzerland will be left behind in the integration process at considerable economic cost and forecasts for economic growth have been lowered.

The Efta ministers agreed to produce a draft protocol to the EEA agreement by early January, with a diplomatic conference to adopt it immediately afterwards. A "strong commitment" was given in a

Carr's lifts back into the black

By RODNEY HOBSON

CARR'S Milling Industries has returned to profit despite difficult economic conditions. It made pre-tax profit of £277,000 in the year to August, compared with a loss of £228,000 in the previous 12 months.

A final 2.9p makes a same-again 3.9p total. Despite the better news, the shares fell 4p to 82p.

Ian Carr, the chairman, said: "The balance sheet remains sound and borrowings are lower than last year. It was recognised that this would be a difficult year but despite the very competitive conditions progress has been made. All trading sectors performed better, with notable successes in our agricultural business, but the continuing pressure on bread margins hampered our progress."

The figures included a £405,000 charge for the estimated costs of withdrawal from egg production and packaging. Mr Carr said the delayed four price increase meant that higher wheat costs were not totally recovered. Baking margins were severely squeezed.

THE SUNDAY TIMES

Black Wednesday

When the conversation turned to the Bundesbank Major became very angry. "He said this was the fifth or sixth time it had totally undermined the pound. It was absolutely unforgivable..."

The truth behind Black Wednesday — Business. The Sunday Times tomorrow

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BUSINESS PROFILE: Christopher Morris

A star in the twilight zone of insolvency

The Touche Ross liquidator says women cry in his office — after he has fired their husbands. Carol Leonard reports

Christopher Morris is a man of the moment. The recession of the late eighties and early nineties, the worst since the second world war, has seen him in his element. For Morris, 50, is one of the stars of the insolvency world. He is chairman of the special services department of Touche Ross, the accountancy firm, and, among much else, has been the steady hand on the tiller at the Bank of Credit and Commerce International, since, at £6.6 billion, it became the biggest liquidation the world has seen.

Morris was, however, something of a celebrity long before BCCI. He was, after all, the man who handled the liquidation of Laker Airways, which has gone down in insolvency textbooks as a near-perfect example of what the insolvency profession can achieve. He launched court case after court case, until he had

'It takes me a very short time to suss people out and another ten minutes to prove myself correct'

ensured that almost all of Laker's creditors were as good as fully paid. Morris is not, however, a man to engage unnecessarily in argument. He is a formidable opponent, for sure. He admits that he enjoys "intellectual tussle", he will stoically defend the underdog, and he despises people who "put down" underlings. "I dislike people who are rude to my secretary and then as nice as pie to me, for instance. I will not hesitate to tell them," Morris does not mince his words, is inclined to be clipped in conversation, and is, in short, the sort of man who would find it impossible to waffle.

He denies, however, that his reputation as an aggressive litigator is justified. "I regard litigation as a tool to achieve something. But planning the tactics of litigation in order to get money back from people is very interesting." Similarly, he makes snap assessments about people. "It takes me a very short time to suss people out and another ten minutes to prove myself correct. I do not think I have ever made a really serious error of judgment about someone" — but he will not provoke an argument

with those he dislikes for the sake of it. "If I come across someone I do not like I just do not converse with them, rather than actively dislike them."

Those who know him well say he actively avoids open confrontation. Ian McIsaac, one of his Touche Ross colleagues, says: "What you see is genuinely what you get. Christopher has not changed at all over the years. He has been permanently in boyish middle age. You might think that he was full of guile and cunning, but he is not. To begin with, I too imagined that he was much more Machiavellian than in fact he is. He is much more straightforward than many people realise."

Morris is a large man, mentally and physically. He is six feet tall and two stone overweight. He does not engage in office politics, is not interested in office gossip and he prefers to socialise with artists and

musicians rather than bankers and fellow chartered accountants. "I like people who are more intelligent than me and who know about things I know nothing about." This, perhaps, reflects his one regret: that he did not go to university. "I

think it's preferable not to have too many friends who are to do with work. It's so nice to go to dinner parties and find that one is the only accountant there."

Morris, a divorcee and father of two sons, Anthony, 23, and Dominic, 21, enjoys dinner parties. He is a clubbable male who likes good, traditional English food. "I'm not a novice cuisine man, I like oysters, smoked salmon and game" — fine wine, stimulating conversation and mixed or all-male company.

"I'm a man's man, I like male company. I would not mind going to a stag dinner, I belong to the Turf Club, which is a male club." If he had been asked to vote on whether women should be admitted to the priesthood he would, he says, have voted against it. The church, after all, is a matter close to his heart. Baptised as a Roman Catholic and educated at Ampleforth College, the Catholic board-



Steady hand: Christopher Morris has overseen the BCCI liquidation and his handling of Laker made the textbooks

ing school, Morris says: "I'm a little unorganised about the organised church at the moment, but I am definitely a Christian and if I go to church I will go to a Catholic church. I go regularly but not frequently."

He also enjoys male pursuits. "My father taught me all his interests, shooting, fishing, all that sort of stuff." At school he was, he says, sociable, but not a team player. The youngest of three — his sister and brother were respectively nine and ten years older than him — he has the air of an only child. Academically, he was "in the upper quartile" but he, nevertheless, failed maths O level twice. "I passed it on the third attempt. I can add up but I cannot do algebra and geometry. You do not need to be able to do maths to

be an accountant. My skill is that I can look at financial data and know if it is instantly right or wrong. With exams, my ambition was always to get 51 per cent rather than to take a prize. I do not carry that on into my professional work, but I do not like exams. I do not think they are a good way of measuring people's ability."

As an insolvency practitioner his particular talents are seen as best employed in dealing with important, set-piece liquidations, such as Laker and BCCI.

He rarely gets involved in work-out situations. "I'm not one of the better behind-the-scenes company reconstruction people. I'm more of an investigative accountant, trying to find where assets may have gone. If I'm sitting on a train, I'm the sort

of person who always finds another person's newspaper more interesting than my own. I think I'm naturally nosy. Yes, I have always been like that."

Of his two sons, the eldest, Anthony, is most like him. "His personality is very much like mine. He is gregarious, slightly stubborn and has a good sense of humour."

The description fits Morris as a young man. Born in Surbiton, brought up in a detached house in Thames Ditton, Surrey, his mother was half-Gibraltar. "She was very gassy, she had lots of friends" — while his father had been a senior executive in Parry Bank, which later merged with Westminster Bank. "My parents were relatively ancient by the time I was born. My

father was 52 and my mother 42. My father retired when I was eight and so he wasn't working very much as I grew up. That's why I enjoyed boarding school so much, because my parents were so old."

Yet, for someone who seems so well balanced, who had a happy childhood and who so obviously enjoys fellow human company, Morris is steadfastly unemotional in the way he tackles his professional duties. He was, he says, not so detached when he started his career. "Right at the very beginning I got terribly involved trying to sort everybody out, trying to find them jobs. But then I realised that you have to adopt the role of a surgeon or doctor, treat the patient properly and don't get involved." He says he cannot remember the

last time he cried. "Although lots of people have cried in this office. Lots of women, after I have fired their husbands."

His successes have brought with them corresponding financial rewards, but although his home is now a comfortable house in Islington, north London, Morris is not obviously motivated by money. He has use of a chauffeur-driven BMW during office hours, but his company car is a C registration Saab. He is always punctual — "I always allow enough time to get somewhere and I expect other people to do the same" — but he is not a naturally tidy person. "I'm a bit shambolic really." He is, he says, not interested in clothes and he has the ever so slightly dishevelled look of an eminent professor, yet with thinner lipped determination and pale blue eyes that refuse to waver.

Morris, in contrast to the chief executives of FTSE 100 companies of a similar age, is not driven by the same deep-seated ambition. They have a hunger or desire often fuelled by some perceived imbalance in their childhood, parentage or schooling. Morris, for a start, is not given to the introspection that that stunts, even subconsciously, would require. "I am not reflective about myself or my personal life. I honestly do not think about it. I do not do much stocktaking."

Instead, he views himself as being genuinely lucky to have fallen into a career he continues to find so absorbing. To him, nothing could be more fascinating. "Every day is different. Every morning at 9 am I make plans for the rest of the day and by 1 pm they have all changed." Friends say that if they had to select a different career for him, they could see him as a lawyer, a Chancery QC and perhaps, in his spare time, a poet. "He loves the English language, playing with words and puns," says one.

"Other people seem to have a rather more exalted impression of me than I have of myself," Morris counters. "I regard myself as a fairly ordinary chap, lucky enough to have been a partner in a firm which has been relatively successful." He will, he says, retire in ten years, when he is 60. "One is naturally getting prepared for that," he says. "Then I shall perhaps move out of London, keep a small place here, but go and live in Leicestershire or Lincolnshire. I might even get married again, you never know. But I would not woo her with flowers and chocolates. I would opt for a trip to the races instead."

Klöckner troubles spell good news for British Steel shareholders

BRITISH Steel shareholders may shudder as they digest the news that Klöckner, Germany's fourth largest steel producer, is to seek court protection from its creditors for DM2.7 billion.

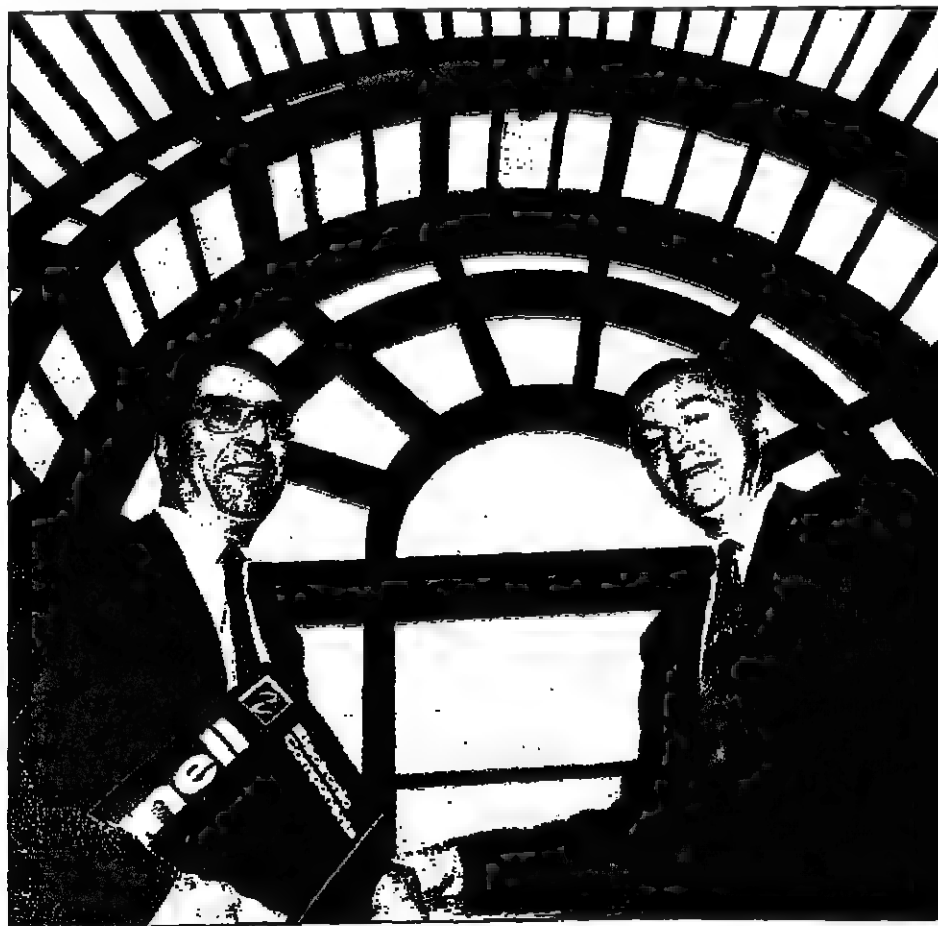
The news is a grim reminder of the chronic overcapacity that remains in the European steel industry. Of 130-140 million tonnes of production capacity, about 30 million tonnes can be deemed as excess in present markets. In addition, the German steel association expects 7.2 million tonnes of eastern European steel to be sold at any price or dumped.

Klöckner, accounts for just 4 million tonnes of capacity, but bears special relevance to the European game plan. After the merger plans between Hoesch and Krupp were announced last year, to create a powerful number two to Thyssen, attention shifted to Klöckner as the "way in" to the German steel market.

British Steel has already done a deal with Klöckner, buying the Mannesmann mill in Troisdorf in 1990. And analysts' thoughts immediately turned to British Steel yesterday after the Klöckner announcement because it has long expressed a wish to have a greater presence in Germany. However, it is more than likely to pass up the opportunity this time.

Klöckner's finances contrast sharply with those of British Steel. British Steel has gearing of 5 per cent while Klöckner is snowed under with debt gearing of 200 per cent or more.

But Klöckner has, at Bremen, the most modern flat rolled sheet plant in Europe, whose only serious problem has been underuse, given the high cost of labour in Germany. Because it was the last plant to be built, Klöckner's German operation suffered from the EC quota restrictions in the early 1980s. It seems likely that Hoogovens, of The Netherlands, which has 5 million tonnes of capacity, will talk to Klöckner and use up some of



Looking ahead: Henry Elstone, left, Farnell's finance chief, with Richard Hanwell

the European funds that have been set aside to cover much needed redundancies in the steel industry. Klöckner sees a cut from 5,800 to 4,700 jobs in the medium term.

So Klöckner's problems and any resulting capacity cuts look like being a small dose of good news for British Steel's recession-bruised shareholders.

With the shares down 1p to 53p yesterday they need it. The dividend is likely to be only 1p a share for the year to end-March, leaving the shares on a yield of 2.5 per cent. Losses of about £150 million are likely in the current year.

Shareholders in British Steel should hold on, but they will need to exercise their patience and hope for a rapid

burst of Darwinian evolution in the European industry.

Farnell

RICHARD Hanwell, veteran of several bruising bid battles in the printing industry before he took charge at Farnell Electronics this spring, will shortly announce the long-awaited appointment of a chief executive at the Harrogate electronic components distributor.

The move is a significant one for Farnell, run for years as a somewhat introverted business that was unwilling to make the jump into the big league in a business where, increasingly, critical mass was what counted.

Mr Hanwell's arrival was swiftly followed by the ac-

rimonious departure of Eric Hall, the previous chief executive.

Farnell's strong cash flow has cut gearing to below 10 per cent again, little more than a year after the £61 million purchase of STC's electronic components subsidiary. The new chief executive's first aim will be to expand the European distribution network, by acquisition or joint venture.

The shares are still standing at a high for the year and do not come cheap. Analysts have no reason to suppose that 25 years of earnings growth is coming to an end, and they are selling on 19 times' earnings for the year to end-January. Any sign of weakness and they should be bought and tucked away.

PEP M&G DIVIDEND PERFORMANCE SINCE LAUNCH

Year Ended 31st Dec	\$6,000 Lump Sum			\$50 per month		
	M&G Dividend Net	M&G Dividend Gross	Gross Building Society	Amount Invested	M&G Dividend Net	M&G Dividend Gross
6.5.1964	\$6,000	\$6,000	\$6,000	\$50	\$50	\$50
1964	5,796	5,796	6,230	350	319	357
1965	5,504	6,672	6,633	950	974	1,001
1966	6,120	6,360	7,094	1,550	1,456	1,693
1967	7,224	7,728	7,610	2,150	2,331	2,439
1968	9,900	10,872	8,187	2,750	3,866	4,087
1969	8,256	9,252	8,872	3,350	3,766	4,022
1970	8,376	9,636	9,634	3,950	4,411	4,784
1971	12,696	15,036	10,437	4,550	7,452	8,236
1972	15,696	18,960	11,286	5,150	9,839	11,017
1973	11,832	14,496	12,395	5,750	7,869	8,667
1974	7,224	9,036	13,810	6,350	5,225	5,956
1975	16,164	20,760	15,373	6,950	12,446	14,446
1976	15,540	20,436	17,078	7,550	12,512	14,770
1977	24,696	33,288	18,939	8,150	20,559	24,739
1978	27,396	37,812	20,817	8,750	23,390	28,689
1979	28,476	40,176	23,434	9,350	24,848	31,022
1980	32,436	46,836	27,023	9,950	28,864	36,727
1981	37,464	55,488	30,688	10,550	33,929	44,107
1982	45,672	69,288	34,667	11,150	41,981	55,699
1983	55,964	84,180	38,302	11,750	51,304	68,815
1984	90,504	142,368	42,722	12,350	84,781	116,061
1985	112,968	180,180	48,189	12,950	106,466	147,530
1986	152,352	245,892	53,615	13,550	144,214	201,966
1987	184,248	300,696	59,392	14,150	174,961	247,537
1988	205,160	335,220	65,131	14,750	195,519	276,549
1989	257,076	428,544	73,382	15,350	245,483	354,160
1990	218,640	368,880	84,046	15,950	209,307	305,380
1991	226,320	387,120	93,554	16,550	217,187	321,009
30.11.1992	268,320	466,560	101,493*	17,100	258,064	387,458

Notes: The values shown have been calculated as if an M&G PEP and its current tax treatment were available throughout the period shown. The value to you of the tax benefits will depend on your own circumstances. The tax regime of PEPs could change in the future. All figures include re-invested income. M&G Dividend figures show the return to the investor. The Building Society figures are based on the average rate of a Building Society Share Account (Source: Central Statistical Office). The regular savings figures exclude the last payment and all payments apart from the first are made on the last business day of the month. An investment in M&G Dividend of £5,000 on 30th November, 1987 would be worth £9,238 by 30th November, 1992 with net income re-invested and £9,842 with gross income re-invested. An investment of £50 per month from 30th November, 1987 (£3,000) would be worth £3,345 by 30th November, 1992 with net income re-invested and £3,461 with gross income re-invested. *Estimated using current interest rate levels. Past performance is not necessarily a guide to future performance. The price of units and the income from them may go down as well as up. You may get back less than you invested.

NEW HANDBOOK

To: The M&G Group, M&G House, Victoria Road, Chelmsford CM1 1FB. Tel: (0245) 390390 (Business Hours). Please send me a free copy of the new M&G Handbook including details of how to invest in M&G's range of unit trusts through a lump sum, savings plan or the M&G PEP. NO SALESMAN WILL CALL.

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UNIT TRUSTS • PEPs • SAVINGS PLANS

M&G

Hopes revive for cut in base rates

THE last trading account of 1992 ended on a cautious note despite the news that inflation had fallen to its lowest level for six years.

But the news that the retail price index has dropped from 3.6 per cent to 3 per cent enabled earlier losses to be halved as hopes were revived that there is now scope for another cut in bank base rates from their current level of 7 per cent.

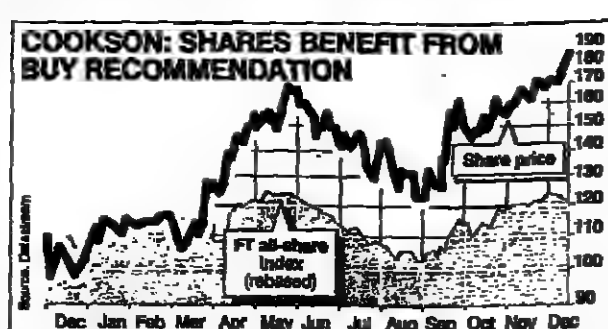
The FT-SE 100 index, down more than 22 points in early trading, finished the day 10.3 lower at 2,716.2, a fall of 43.9 on the account. The new three-week account, taking in

vestors into 1993, starts on Monday. The FT-SE index of 250 companies finished 3.6 lower at 2,662.0.

Trading conditions were described as thin, with many investors having taken profits earlier in the week ahead of Thursday's Bundesbank meeting. The total number of shares changing hands reached almost 700 million.

These figures were boosted by a BZW sell programme thought to be worth about £100 million and year-end bond and breakfast operations carried out by fund managers to establish tax losses.

Among leaders, British



Steel suffered an early market-down on the announcement that Klockner, the German steelmaker, had filed for protection from its creditors. The European steel industry is in a

depressed state with both prices and volume levels continuing to lose ground. British Steel is expected to make price losses of more than £100 million in the current year, with a sharp cut in the dividend from 4.5p to 1p. The shares later recovered, to end 1p cheaper at 53p.

Unilever, the Anglo-Dutch food and household products group, advanced 7p to £10.69. It has agreed to spend £25 million on a 70 per cent stake in SZPT, the Polish state-owned edible oils business, and to invest \$14 million in the business over the next three years.

The recovery at Cookson comes as space with County NorthWest now deciding to recommend the shares as a buy. It says the management is making every effort to increase margins and is confident the group can achieve substantial progress even without an upturn in the economy.

County expects the shares to outperform long-term. They closed 6p better, at a new high for the year of 184p. Mean-

while, the speculators are still pinning their hopes on another mega-bid emerging to kick-off the new year in style. Top of their list remains Tarmac, 6p better at 106p, after recovering from an early market-down. Minotro is again being mentioned as the most likely acquirer and there is no disguising the fact that Tarmac is vulnerable. Its debt level remains high despite recent disposals and the out-

look for the construction industry is far from rosy.

Lucas Industries is regarded as another vulnerable target and BTR is known to have looked closely at the company. Lucas continues to scour the share register, but so far, there is no evidence to suggest that anyone has begun stake-building. The problems of the recession have caused analysts to express concern about a possible cut in the dividend, but as Lucas is only too well aware, this would almost certainly open the gates to a hostile bidder.

Guinness marked time at 478p. The shares have been

Only five days after shares in Tadpole Technology were placed at 65p, investors have seen their initial investment almost trebled. The price closed 48p higher, at 194p.

badly hit this week by profit downgrades from brokers in the wake of a warning from the company that 1993 will be even more difficult.

These downgrades have also overshadowed the rest of the drinks sector, although a few cheap buyers were on hand yesterday to boost prices. Bass firmed 5p to 609p. Grand Metropolitan 1p to 431p. Greencall 12p to 372p. Scottish & Newcastle 8p to 438p. Whitbread 8p to 453p and Wolverhampton & Dudley 8p to 545p.

Regulatory worries again overshadowed the electricity companies, with Eastern down 3p at 397p. East Midlands 2p at 407p. London 10p at 417p. Manweb 4p at 468p. Midlands 5p at 446p. Northern 2p at 439p. Northumbria 4p at 445p. Scottish 7p at 428p. Southern 5p at 421p. South Wales 12p at 484p. South West 5p at 431p and Yorkshire 5p at 462p.

Prudential Corporation fell 1p to 281p after announcing that it was withdrawing from its remaining commercial lines business in this country. But as thought to rub salt into the wound, Credit Lyonnais Laing has decided to cut its pre-tax profit forecast for the current year by £35 million to £415 million.

MICHAEL CLARK

Dow lower in early trading

New York — Shares were lower at late morning, continuing to be hit by profit-taking, traders said. They added that the selling should be viewed as short-term since the market had traded down for a few days now, and that bargain buying was certain to emerge.

The Dow Jones industrial average was off 8.65 points, at 3,303.54.

Tokyo — Shares surrendered early gains and closed lower in choppy trade. The Nikkei average was down 60.28 points to 17,441.02.

Hong Kong — The Sino-British political chill over Hong Kong meant yet another loss for shares, but brokers said most of the damage from the fruitless bilateral talks has been done. The Hang Seng index closed at 5,253.18, down 20.61 points.

Singapore — Prices closed firm with selective buying in cautious trading, brokers said.

The Straits Times industrial

Index rose 5.19 points to close at 1,447.57.

Sydney — The market closed barely changed after a week of strong rises. The All Ordinaries index finished down 0.6 points at 1,500.7.

Frankfurt — Technical factors helped German shares

claw back some of their early losses, but they still posted their weakest close since November 4. After taking a beating during post-holiday trading, the Dax index ended 1.2 per cent down, at 1,476.01. (Reuter)

THE TIMES PORTFOLIO DEALING SERVICE

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134. If you have

A gross way to behave



COMMENT

LINDSAY COOK
WEEKEND MONEY EDITOR

Gross interest rates are 33 per cent higher than those net of basic rate tax so it is not surprising that all our financial institutions seem to have adopted them with alacrity to demonstrate the returns they can offer to investors. In some cases the gross rates are quoted prominently by illustrious investment houses when the very nature of the product being offered means that tax must be deducted and cannot be reclaimed by non-taxpayers.

The Life Assurance and Unit Trust Regulatory Organisation is now investigating firms that have been advertising gross returns that could never be achieved by investors. The bonds involved offer a guaranteed return and are attractive to those who have seen their income fall because their savings are earning a much lower interest rate.

They leap at the chance of a higher income with no risk of capital loss.

They should first of all remember that guarantees are only as good as the companies or organisations that

make them and firms that imply a higher return is available than is ought to be given a wide berth.

While some investors may believe that the gross returns can be paid to non-taxpayers this is not the case. UK life companies are subject to tax on the funds and have to deduct this and, like building society accounts before April last year, the tax cannot be reclaimed by individual investors whose own income is too low to pay tax. Even expatriate investors cannot get the money paid free of tax.

But undoubtedly such enhanced returns are eye catching at a time when savings rates have more than halved over the past two years, and have helped salesmen to persuade large numbers of investors to transfer their money into the safety of these high-return bonds.

Banks and building societies must be happy that the taxation of savings changed at the time that interest

rates started falling. When composite rate tax was deducted at source from all savings accounts and could not be reclaimed by non-taxpayers, all banks and building societies quoted interest rates net of CRT.

Then last year they began to change their advertisements so that the gross rate appears most prominently, even though the majority of their customers are taxpayers and will have to have basic rate tax deducted.

Some savers may even be confused when they see headline rates of 9.6 per cent and believe that is what

they are getting when in fact the interest for a basic rate taxpayer is 7.2 per cent. It is indeed fortunate that quoting gross rates is now the norm or customers might realise that many of them are earning negative real interest rates when inflation is taken into account.

Even with the fall in the annual inflation rate to 3 per cent there are lots of high-interest cheque accounts, ordinary share accounts and children's accounts paying returns after tax is deducted that are below 3 per cent.

If the net rates which the majority

received were most prominent, savers might move their money before the interest was paid.

Same old trick

Suckers are still being sought with the promise of £1,000 a week. Mailings are being sent out in the hope of attracting people made desperate by the recession.

In the summer Weekend Money highlighted the case of a Barnsley firm making the same offer. It claimed the offer was limited to 100 places. All the recipients had to do to take advantage of the offer was send £50 a month by standing order.

Now two firms in Folkestone, Kent, and Sheffield, Bedfordshire are offering an almost identical package. People are urged to respond within seven days and lured with the line "if you can read and write — you can do it." Those who

send off their money will receive a book — the first of 12 — telling them how to send out similar mailings to other "business opportunity enthusiasts" asking them to sign up and pay by standing order.

The true sign of the recession in the new offerings is the now bargain basement price of £49.95 a month. The mailings all give credit to the recession: "Our research indicates that ironically it may well have been because of the recession that this business has thrived so well."

There are indeed more unemployed people who have failed to find conventional jobs and want to believe in such get rich quick schemes. The banking system does, however, protect the gullible. Because the outfits offering £5,000 a month for a few hours part-time work are newly set up, they cannot use the direct debit system. Only established companies can ask their banks to withdraw any amount from other customers' accounts. Standing orders cannot be varied and are more easily cancelled by bank customers.

Insurance companies take tougher line over claims by rigidly enforcing conditions on policies

'Lost' tender allegation turns into fraud claim

By Sara McConnell

A HOMEOWNER who claimed on his buildings insurance for subsidence found himself before the High Court against a powerful insurance company and is now faced with a possible £400,000 bill for costs and a tarnished reputation for claiming more than he should have done under an insurance policy.

The case against Paul Diggins has implications for all policyholders. He has been fighting Sun Alliance for six years, mainly over whether he submitted all the tenders for building work on his house or whether, as Sun Alliance says, suppressed the cheapest quote. The company alleged Mr Diggins wanted work other than just subsidence to be done and got the builders to damp proof his basement as well.

Six years ago, Mr Diggins' home in Brighton showed signs of subsidence. The work done included underpinning a rear patio and the final bill was £150,000. Sun Alliance paid £100,000 but refused to pay the £50,000 balance. Mr Diggins took legal advice and served a writ on Sun Alliance but the company counterclaimed, saying his claim was fraudulent.

The judge accepted Sun Alliance's argument that the work Mr Diggins was claiming for included retanking the basement which was getting damp and this led to an inflated insurance claim. He further found that Mr Diggins had deliberately suppressed the lowest tender for the subsidence work. Mr Diggins is now trying to muster funds for an appeal against a judgment he describes as "outrageous". An application for legal aid was rejected and he is appealing.

He says if he loses he must return the £100,000 paid by Sun Alliance, pay its £250,000 legal costs and his £100,000 costs. Until the appeal is heard, the bank accounts of his 20-year old sports business have been frozen.

"My business is slowly dying because I can't buy stock," he said. His house, valued at £400,000 in 1988 but probably worth about £300,000 now, is about to go on the market but even the proceeds would probably not cover his

ance and its loss adjuster had lost a set of photographs and negatives of the subsidence which could not then be used as evidence. Mr Diggins said: "I feel that what I have done, nine out of 10 people would have done. I took professional advice, I left it to the professionals. Once the claim had been accepted, I expected the work to be done. I didn't know about the extra works or why they were required. All I wanted was for them to leave it as it was before." Sun Alliance

was accordingly justified in refusing payment under the policy and defending proceedings brought by the insured for the recovery of monies fraudulently claimed.

It added: "The vast majority of claims we receive are clearly legitimate. However, procedures are threatened by a small but significant number of bogus claims. The whole aim of our business is to pay claims quickly and equitably for genuine claimants. Customers do not pay premiums

ANDREW HARRISON



Subsidence blues: Paul Diggins on the patio which had to be underpinned at his home

costs if he lost his appeal. In court, Mr Diggins said he could not recollect the tender alleged by Sun Alliance to be the lowest but if he had seen it, it would have been passed on to the loss adjuster. This tender was said to have been £69,000, against the £77,000 estimate of the builder who did the work. It was not produced in court. The final cost rose because the engineer changed the design of the works after they had started.

He also claimed Sun Alli-

ance said in a statement: "After consideration of the evidence in a trial lasting nearly five weeks, the judge found that Mr Diggins was aware of the damp problems in the basement."

"Mr Diggins impliedly represented that one estimate for the building work was the lowest when he knew that another was lower. There was an attempt to include damp-proofing works although this was known not to be an insured peril. Sun Alliance

to subsidise fraud." Companies are becoming more alert to the possibility of inflated claims, said the Insurance Ombudsman Bureau.

Complaining to the ombudsman can save policyholders the time and money involved in taking an insurer to court.

Those who do not accept the ombudsman's decision, can still take legal action. But the ombudsman cannot look at any case subject to court proceedings.

When all-risks did not mean all risks

By Anne Caborn

PEOPLE with car and home contents insurance may feel reassured that they will be compensated if their car is broken into and their possessions stolen. But some items may not be covered.

Silvia Cooper found this out to her cost after taking her 20 month old son Alastair swimming in Brighton one day in October. When she returned to her car she found it had been broken into.

"They'd got in through the side window of my 2CV and then opened the back door. My portable baby seat had gone along with all Alastair's toys and the pushchair."

The total replacement cost for the missing items was in excess of £164. But her car insurance only offered a maximum of £50 for car accessories and this would not extend to the toys or the pushchair.

Mrs Cooper was shocked to discover her house contents policy did not cover her either, as she had thought the pushchair, car seat and toys were personal effects covered under the all-risks section.

"I would have been all right if they were stolen from the house, but personal belongings only included things like jewellery, or a camera. When I read the small print it was all there, but I was really annoyed that things I class as personal possessions aren't covered."

Mrs Cooper's case is not unusual. According to the Association of British Insurers a



Expensively re-equipped: Silvia Cooper and Alastair

typical car insurance policy will offer "very limited cover," perhaps up to £100. When it comes to household insurance, most policies cover for theft things from the home, but only where it is the result of forced or violent entry to another building, not a car.

An all-risks policy extension would cover a car, but this section will usually define in detail what counts as a personal possession. "There should

be a definition section which says what the insurer counts as valuables," said the ABI. If the item in question is not mentioned, even if it is not specifically excluded, you should talk to your insurer to double check you are covered, or if your policy can be extended to include cover. Family cars can offer rich pickings for thieves and car boot sales are one way they can dispose of goods, particularly toys, before Christmas. In the year to June

1992 there were 931,300 recorded cases of theft from a vehicle, according to the Home Office — 9 per cent more than the previous 12 months. The increase in car crime has slowed, which is largely attributed to the car crime prevention campaign launched by the government. But, so far, the improvement has been more marked in theft of cars rather than theft from cars.

Vehicle crime, including theft from and theft of vehicles, is still the biggest single component of all recorded crime — accounting for 28 per cent. "A car is not a secure place to leave things and it probably makes practical sense to keep as little in the car as possible," said the ABI. "A lot of things are stolen almost by invitation," said a senior policeman. "It is also important to remember the policy holder has a duty of care," said a spokesman for Guardian Royal Exchange. An insurer could have a case for not paying if a valuable item, covered by all-risks, was left where it could easily be stolen.

GRE would not have covered Mrs. Cooper's items under their standard policy, but the items could have been covered with a policy extension up to a limit of £750. The add-on cost would be £2 per £100 sum insured. As far as GRE car insurance is concerned there is a limit of £1,000 on such claims and it would probably result in the loss of any no-claims bonus.

POLICYHOLDERS claiming for building work from their insurer should get more than one estimate from builders and submit them all, said the Association of British Insurers (Lindsay Cook writes).

Failing to send a low quotation could leave them open to allegations of fraud, said a spokeswoman. This was very rare, she said, because estimates tended to be about the same unless a builder submitted a particularly high figure if it did not want the job.

If the homeowners feel one is too low and are worried that the job will not be handled properly they should write a note accompanying the estimates explaining their fears, she said. "You would need a fairly good reason not to submit all the estimates you have got. If one was significantly lower, the insurance company could wonder why the policyholder had kept it back if they found out about it."

If one estimate undercuts

Insurers stress that every estimate must be submitted

the others dramatically the policyholder should ask the builder to detail why the estimate was so much cheaper. It could be that the builder did not plan to use scaffolding when it was a requirement for the job. If the firm was not in a recognised trade body this would be a reason not to use it. Insurers would listen to such concerns, she added.

"While companies do not want to pay over the odds for work there is no point in their going for the cheapest if there is trouble completing the job. It can be time consuming for a company chasing up an unsatisfactory builder. Where a larger claim is involved the

loss adjuster may be able to suggest a builder locally who is capable of doing the job, she said. "In most cases the difference between quotes is small in financial terms. It is better to be straight with the insurance company."

Insurers are concerned that policyholders try to add work to a claim that should not be paid for by them but are repairs for general wear and tear. This year they run an advertising campaign warning policyholders not to make fraudulent claims or they face a criminal conviction.

General Accident said: "When it comes to choosing a builder we want to get a good

job done at a low price. We might not necessarily go for the cheapest quote. For example, we might be able to negotiate a higher one down."

"Policyholders select who they get quotes from. It might be someone who has done work for them before. If there is a cheaper quote than the one favoured by the policyholder then the policyholder can negotiate to pay the difference or we can negotiate with the builder on price. We would expect all the estimates to be submitted."

Norwich Union has no set number of estimates required before work can be carried out. "For a small claim we probably only need one, for a large one, several, and for a significant claim we would send an adjuster," it said. "If they seem too high or too low we might look more closely. As a rule we like the customers to be happy with the standard of repairs. We do not always take the lowest."

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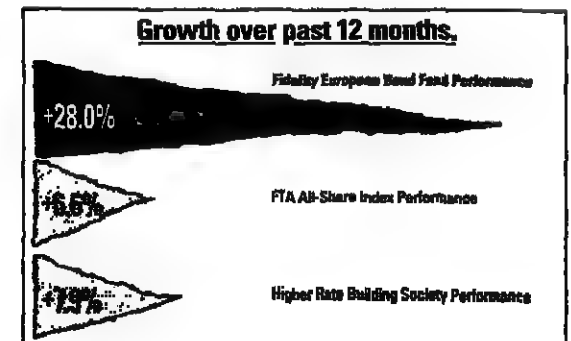
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Seeking pearls of financial wisdom

By LINDSAY COOK
MONEY EDITOR

SECONDARY school pupils want to learn more about running their finances according to a survey by Pearl Assurance. At 13, only 27 per cent of pupils believe they are being taught enough about how to handle their personal finance. By 18 the figure has dropped to 11 per cent.

Not surprisingly they are badly informed. More than 20 per cent of those questioned thought they would not have to pay interest when borrowing money. Pearl has produced a package to support financial education in schools. It aims to help teenagers manage their finances better and includes worksheets on renting and buying properties, insurance, investment, interest and loans and tax and National Insurance.

It explains working out net pay, calculating overtime and what factors affect the size of personal tax allowances. On mortgages it asks whether the borrower should expect to pay back more or less than the original sum borrowed and asks how a mortgage can be linked to a life policy.

Case studies include someone earning £15,400 and it asks the students to work out what he can afford each month and how much a person needs to earn a year to pay £650 a month. The answers are £449 and £22,285 a year. Pearl suggests 35 per cent maximum of gross earnings should go on a mortgage.

The insurance worksheet explains how risks change over the years. For example, in 1951 infectious diseases accounted for seven times as many deaths of women aged 45 to 59 as they did in 1989, but the proportion of deaths from cancer had risen more than 60 per cent. The tasks include working out the mortality rate for males aged 20. Intended for 14 to 16 year olds doing mathematics courses, the pack should give teenagers a practical grounding in personal finances.

Children's savings rates fall to a Scrooge-like 1%

By SARA MCCONNELL

PARENTS and grandparents who would like to invest money or open a savings account for children this Christmas still have a wide range of tax-free savings accounts from which to choose.

But many of the larger building societies are paying a miserly 1 per cent or less on children's accounts and at least one leading bank, the National Westminster, has withdrawn its children's account, called the World Saver, advising its young savers to go into its First Reserve account instead.

The Yorkshire and the Woolwich building societies pay some of the worst rates on children's accounts according to Money Facts, the specialist magazine which gives a monthly guide on the best place to put savings.

Both are paying about 1 per cent gross on minimum balances of £1 but many children would get a much better rate by moving their savings into an adult's account which has the same minimum investment.

The Woolwich For Kids account pays 1 per cent gross on minimum balances of £1 for children under 12 but the society's Prime Gold account pays 1.85 per cent on the same balance.

The society said that the For Kids account offered magazines, moneyboxes and competitions so the rate was lower but admitted that these could be bought in branches by children or their parents and that there was a much better rate on the Prime Gold account.

Children in the Yorkshire's Future Key account would, however, have to have a balance of at least £1,000 to qualify for the society's adult Golden Key account.

The society pays 1 per cent on its Future Key account, adding £2.50 to the balance when it reaches £50, £100, £250 and £500.

But the best rates for children still come from the smaller building societies.

The Chorley and District Building Society's Young Chorleyan savings account pays 8.35 per cent gross on balances of between £5 and £5,000 in the name of children up to the age of 21.

The Cambridge Building Society pays 8 per cent on balances of between £1 and £800 to children under 16



saving in its First Account. Good rates are still on offer from National Savings' Children's Bonus Bond, although new issues on sale from last Monday are offering a lower rate of 7.85 per cent tax-free if an investment is held for five years.

The bond was introduced in July last year and is available to any child under 16 years of age. Up to £1,000 can be invested in the bond in the child's name and the bonds can be bought by anyone over

who are thinking of buying Capital Bonds for their children could be liable for tax if the interest earned on the account amounts to more than £100, whereas there would never be any liability on the Children's Bonus bond.

Premium bonds can be bought for children by parents, grandparents and great grandparents.

Until February next year, they can still buy bonds in units of £10 but after that time, the minimum unit for children

men, usually for at least 10 years.

Barry Chambers, the marketing director of Family Assurance, said savings in the society's Junior Bond had to be held for at least 10 years, with a choice of ages at which the bond could be encashed. The most popular age is 25.

Homeowners' StartRight plan is a whole of life policy but again investors can opt for an encashment age. The most popular age for this is currently 21. There is also the risk that policyholders can lose money if the stock market performs poorly because the plans are unit linked.

Family Assurance's unit-linked funds have given a gross return this year of between 12 and 13 per cent but there is no guarantee that this will continue. The same applies to unit trusts. MIM Brianna's Rupert Trust, aimed at children, would have earned £1,000 invested four years ago at launch into £1,420 but any fall in the value of the blue-chip, FT-SE 100 share index shares, in which the fund invests would lose investors money.

The minimum investment in the Rupert Trust is £10 a month or a £50 lump sum. Children cannot hold unit trusts in their own name. Investors with holdings of more than £400 get a free Rupert bear scarf and with more than £800, a puppet.

Children would get a better rate by moving into an adult account with the same minimum investment

the age 16, and not necessarily a relative of the child.

However, National Savings gave a warning that anyone planning to buy the bonds should check whether the child already has any of them as £1,000 is the maximum total holding.

Children can also hold Capital Bonds, paying 7.75 per cent gross on balances of up to £100,000, and fixed-interest savings certificates.

The 40th issue of these certificates, which went on sale on Monday, pays 5.75 per cent fixed for five years. The maximum new investment is £5,000. However, parents

ren will be £100, as it already is for adults.

Those willing to take a greater risk with their children's investments could open a friendly society savings plan in the child's name.

Most leading friendly societies, including the Home-owners' and Family Assurance, started to offer such plans after being given the freedom to do so in last year's Budget.

The maximum investment in the plans is £18 a month or £200 a year and the proceeds are tax free. However, friendly society plans are long term invest-

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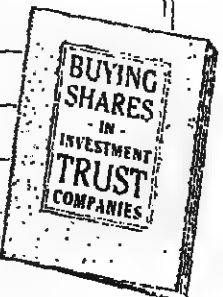
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Forged banknotes make their seasonal visit

Liz Dolan gives a timely warning for shoppers to check notes given in change carefully over Christmas

REVELLERS, shoppers and people selling cars and other expensive items are urged to look out for forged bank notes and counterfeit cheques over the busy Christmas period.

Forgers stand a greater chance of passing off fake notes when shops are busy, assistants flustered and queues impatient to be served.

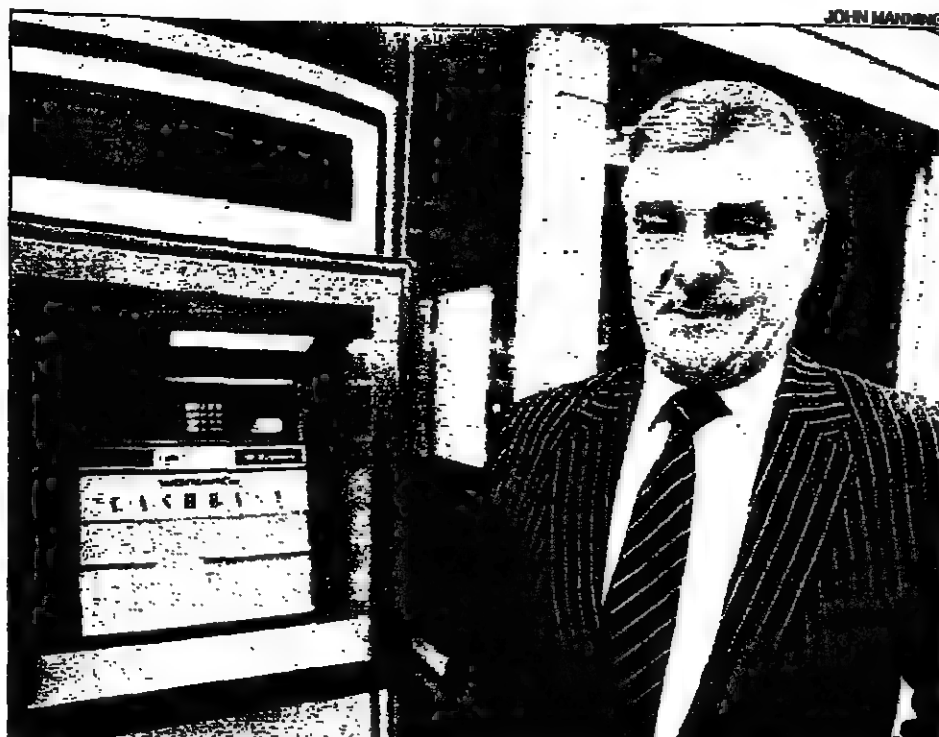
A spokesman for the counterfeit currency unit of the National Criminal Intelligence Service said: "Counterfeiters tend to go for places where staff are busy such as pubs and clubs or shops where staff haven't been trained properly."

Banks and building societies are not immune to the problem either. A few weeks ago, Penny Morris of Hertford was informed by a news agent that at £20 note, obtained from a Woolwich Building Society cash machine, was a forgery.

When she took the note back to the branch, the manager said: "Yes, there are a few of these in circulation, round here" and advised her to take the note to the police.

The police gave her a receipt and, after a few weeks and a number of visits to the branch, the Woolwich replaced the note. Miss Morris said: "I got the impression they were testing me by making me run around a lot, to make sure I was telling the truth. The manager said he didn't want to encourage everyone to come in and try and change forged £20 notes."

The Woolwich said: "This sort of thing does happen, though not very often. Not all



Rogue note: Manager Bob Leys with the Woolwich cash dispenser at Hertford

the notes in our machines are new. We always replace forgeries if customers return them in a reasonable time. We check through our records first, though."

He said money dispensed by cash machines comes from the Bank of England. The Bank of England said: "Money in ATMs comes from

violet note checking machine erroneously flashed up a warning. It transpired the note had at some point gone through a washing machine. Soap is one of the substances that confuses note checking machines."

A spokeswoman for the Kingfisher stores group, which owns Woolworth's,

The NCIS says the number of forged notes handed into, or seized by, the police suddenly doubled two years ago as a direct result of more sophisticated printing techniques and colour copiers. Since then, the numbers have stabilised at an annual face value of £4 million. The Bank of England says at any one time forgers account for 0.01 per cent of all sterling in circulation.

A Bank spokeswoman said counterfeit notes were "pretty easy" to recognise. She said the paper of the genuine note is crisp and some of the letters raised. It must not be smooth, shiny or limp. The cracks in a real used note retain their colour, rather than going white. The printing is high quality, with no blurring of the lines, even when close together. The watermark is a clearly defined portrait with subtle distinctions. The thread down the middle appears as dashes when flat on the table, but becomes a continuous line when held up to the light. People who discover forged notes are legally bound to hand them into the police. They will not get a refund.

Another fertile area for cheats is cheques issued by a building society for a large purchase. They may be offered, for instance, to someone selling a used car privately. In these circumstances, the credit card or personal cheque cannot be used, and carrying around large bundles of cash is obviously inadvisable.

Many people wrongly assume building society cheques offer the same protection for purchaser as a banker's draft, which guarantees payment to the named payee. The Woolwich said: "These cheques are exactly the same as any cheque without a guarantee card. You must wait until the cheque is cleared before releasing the goods. They may have been stolen or forged. People still fail to follow this advice."

'Counterfeiters tend to go for the places where the staff are busy such as pubs and clubs or shops'

a number of sources including recycled notes from customers. If a note is counterfeit, it will not come from us. There is no way we recycle forgeries."

Pauline Hedges, information officer at the British Bankers Association, was herself accused by a DIY store of trying to pass off a forged £5 note when the store's ultra

Superdrug and B&Q, said: "We do not use machines because of the danger of making embarrassing mistakes. Our staff are trained to make manual inspections."

Some retailers refused to comment on counterfeit notes. John Lewis said: "Any information at all can be a gift to the mill of the criminal fraternity."

No more Christmas cheques

BY OUR WEEKEND MONEY STAFF

A CHILD receiving a Christmas cheque from a generous relative could discover it is not worth the money it is written on. Changes made in the Cheques Act 1992, passed earlier this year, mean that most cheques cannot now be cashed by anyone who does not have a bank account.

This is because the law now puts the financial onus on the collecting bank, rather than the customer, to make sure the cheque has not been stolen. A bank can now be sued if it accepts a cheque that is not made out to the person banking it.

If a cheque is made out to a child without a bank account there may be difficulty getting

the cash without a replacement cheque being issued. Virtually all cheques now have Account Payee Only, or something similar, stamped across them. Some banks, such as Girobank, will issue old-style cheque books on request but say demand is very low.

The British Bankers Association says the changes have caused a few problems for the 5 per cent of the adult population that do not have bank accounts.

"It's okay for little Johnny's Christmas present, because you can simply make the cheque out to Johnny's mum," says Pauline Hedges, the BBA's press and information manager. "The problems

come when, for instance, someone without a bank account wants to cash a housing benefit cheque to pay the landlord."

She says she has had to deal with a number of such cases. She always advises people in this situation to see the landlord's bank manager. Because the cheques will be paid in on a regular basis, the manager normally agrees to waive the third party rules.

Some people cannot open bank accounts because they are bad credit risks. Outstanding county court judgments, for instance, normally mean that an application to open an account will be turned down.

BRIEFINGS

Fixed rates of below 8 per cent for two years are on offer from the Cheltenham & Gloucester, Abbey National, the Stroud & Swindon and the West Bromwich.

Abbey's fixed rate is 7.79 per cent, an annual percentage rate (APR) of 8.8 per cent, for two years. The rate is

available to new and existing borrowers and can be taken as an endowment, repayment or pension. It is 0.8 per cent higher than the fixed rate offered last month by the Abbey.

There is an administration fee of £199. The Cheltenham & Gloucester has launched a

fixed rate of 7.5 per cent (an APR of 8.7 per cent) for two years.

There is also a five-year fixed-rate of 8.75 per cent (annual percentage rate of 9 per cent). The fee for both loans is £250 and £50 is refundable for applicants interviewed in any Cheltenham & Gloucester branch. Both loans are interest-only and available for loans up to 75 per cent of the value of the property.

The Stroud & Swindon has fixed-rate money at 6.95 per cent for two years and a capped rate of 7.95 per cent for the next 18 months. The West Bromwich has a rate of 7.5 per cent, fixed until April 1 1996.

□ A guaranteed rate of 6.6 per cent gross, 4.95 per cent net for a year on balances of £5,000 or over is being offered by the Bradford & Bingley Building Society on its Maximiser Bond. If interest rates rise, the rate on the bond could also rise. The National & Provincial will pay a guaranteed 7.5 per cent gross, 5.62 per cent net on its Fixed Rate

Reserve account on balances of over £5,000. There is a monthly income option at 7 per cent gross 5.5 per cent.

□ Unsecured loan rates have been cut at the Abbey National and the Nationwide. Personal loan rates at the Nationwide have fallen by between 2.3 per cent and 3.6 per cent to 22.9 per cent APR from loans of £500 to £4,950 and 21.9 per cent for loans of £5,000 to £10,000. The cut is larger than may be expected because the charging structure has been simplified. Abbey's new personal loan rate is 21.4 per cent for loans over £2,000 and paid by direct debit, down from 22.9 per cent. Loans under £2,000 now cost 23.4 per cent, down from 24.9 per cent.

□ The Association of Investment Trust Companies has published two fact sheets explaining how to use investment trusts in financial planning and investing for children. The guides look at ways of minimising or saving tax, meeting special needs like funding a mortgage or paying school fees and ways of buying and selling investment trust shares. They also explain how relatives can invest for a child using their tax allowance and how grandparents can save inheritance tax by giving to their grandchildren.

□ New borrowers at the Bristol & West can get a discount of 2 per cent off the current variable rate of 8.65 per cent. The offer is available for both new mortgages and remortgages. Buildings and contents insurance must be taken out with the society and there is a redemption penalty of three months' interest. If the borrower takes out another mortgage with the society within six months, one month's interest will be refunded.

GUINNESS FLIGHT

INVESTMENT TRUST PEPS

OVER 11% TAX FREE

Call us on 071-522 2111 or return the coupon to find out:

- Why our Income Plan is recommended in Best PEP Advice in the High Income Category.
- How you can earn income of over 11% TAX FREE from a spread of investment trust income shares.
- How you can best harness the excellent performance of investment trusts and benefit from independent selection.

* Based on Current High Income Trusts' quoted yield as at 9 December 1992.

GUINNESS FLIGHT

INVESTMENT TRUST SELECTOR PEP

Return the coupon now for details of the INVESTMENT TRUST SELECTOR PEP or call Ann-Marie Martyn on 071-522 2111. Guinness Flight Fund Managers Limited, Lighterman's Court, 5 Galsford Street, Tower Bridge, London SE1 2NE.

Title _____ Name _____

Address _____

Postcode _____

Post performance is not necessarily a guide to the future. The value of the investment and the income from it may fall as well as rise and is not guaranteed. Also reduction of charges and expenses means you may not get back the amount you invested. The benefits described are those currently applicable and will vary from one investor to another and may change in the future. Issued by Guinness Flight Fund Managers Limited a member of BNPFI.

SELF-EMPLOYED WITHOUT A PENSION?

Ring our free Moneyline from 9.00 a.m. - 5.30 p.m. 7 days a week, on **0800 282 101**

SWE & PROSPER

THE INVESTMENT HOUSE

NEW OFFER
RATE FIXED FOR 6 MONTHS.

hit by rate cut prospect

Down and down go the Savers hit by more cuts rates

FIXED INTEREST BOND

8.00% GROSS P.A.

GUARANTEED FOR 6 MONTHS. MINIMUM INVESTMENT £500.

ONE HEADLINE RATE THAT'S GUARANTEED NOT TO FALL.

Whilst many investors are now seeing their investment rate cut, you can still get a Portman Fixed Interest Bond at the competitive rate of 8.00% gross p.a.

It comes with an absolute guarantee that the rate of interest you earn will be fixed for a full 6 months.

What's more this fixed rate is available on investments from just £500.

Since this is a strictly limited offer, act now by returning the coupon or calling the FREEPHONE number below:

STRICTLY LIMITED OFFER. PHONE FREE OF CHARGE:

0800 663663

MEMBER OF THE BUILDING SOCIETIES ASSOCIATION. ASSETS EXCEEDING £2,500 MILLION.

PORTMAN BUILDING SOCIETY

WHAT'S IMPORTANT TO YOU, IS IMPORTANT TO US.

PRINCIPAL OFFICE: PORTMAN HOUSE, RICHMOND HILL, BOURNEMOUTH BH2 6EP.

Interest is paid at the end of the 6 month term. On completion of the 6 month term your funds will automatically be converted to a Portman Instant Access Account. Assuming the basic rate of tax remains at 25%, the net equivalent rate is 6.00% p.a. Rates correct at time of going to press. Interest will be paid net of basic rate income tax or, subject to the required certification, gross. Where the tax deducted exceeds the tax liability (if any), a claim may be made to the Inland Revenue for repayment of tax. Withdrawals are not permitted during the 6 month term. Minimum investment: £500. Maximum investments: £25,000 per individual or £50,000 for joint investors.

Please complete and return to: Customer Services (Investments), Portman Building Society, Portman House, Richmond Hill, FREEPOST, BOURNEMOUTH BH2 6TB. Please send me/us further details PLEASE TICK ☐

I/we enclose £ _____ (Minimum £500, Maximum £25,000/£50,000) to invest in a Fixed Interest Bond.

Name(s) _____

Address _____

Postcode _____

Signature(s) _____

THE FOOTSIE PEP

THE JAMES CAPEL FT-SE 100 INDEX FUND PEP

YOUR TAX-FREE SHARE IN BRITAIN'S TOP 100 COMPANIES

Call today on 071-955 0017

The Footsie PEP from James Capel Investment Services Limited is designed to match the performance of the famous FT-SE 100 Index.

It offers you a broad spread of risk by investing in every one of Britain's top 100 companies. And it's easy to keep track of, on television and radio daily and in most newspapers.

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Naturally, The Footsie PEP delivers all capital growth and income free of tax.

What's more, if you invest before 31st December 1992 you will receive a 1% discount.

So call now for further information, simply phone 071-955 0017 or return the coupon.

FREEPOST. NO STAMP NEEDED.

Please send me details of The Footsie PEP

Name _____

Address _____

Postcode _____

Daytime Tel No. _____

Post to: James Capel Investment Services Limited, FREEPOST, 7 Devonshire Square, London EC2B 2HL. 7.12.92

INTEREST RATES ROUNDUP

	Nominal rate	Compounded at 25% 40%	Minimum Investment £	Notice	Contact
BANKS					
Typical	0.38	0.38	1,000	7 day	
Overnight	4.55	4.55	25,000-50,000	1 min	071-928 1287
1 month	4.45	4.45	25,000-50,000	1 min	071-928 1287
3 months	3.75	3.75	10,000-100,000	3 min	071-928 1287
6 months	4.03	4.03	10,000-100,000	6 min	071-928 1287
1 year	4.54	4.54	10,000-100,000	1 year	071-928 1287
2 years	4.54	4.54	10,000-100,000	2 years	071-928 1287
3 years	4.51	4.51	10,000-100,000	3 years	071-928 1287
4 years	4.51	4.51	10,000-100,000	4 years	071-928 1287
5 years	4.51	4.51	10,000-100,000	5 years	071-928 1287

HIGH INTEREST CHEQUE ACCOUNTS						
Bank of Scotland MNC	4.88	5.10	4.08	2,500	none	051-442 7777
Barclays	2.63	2.68	2.13	2,500	none	0604 282881
First Direct	0.38	0.38	0.30	500	none	071 628 6543
Co-operative	2.63	2.68	2.13	2,500	none	074 222 2222
Ulster	0.38	0.38	0.30	500	none	071 628 6543
Cheltenham	5.40	5.84	4.43	2,000	none	0800 655989
Lloyds Bank	5.40	5.84	4.43	2,000	none	0800 655989
Midland FICA	2.63	2.68	2.13	2,500	none	0272 435977
Halifax	2.63	2.68	2.13	2,500	none	074 222 2222
NorthWest	1.50	1.81	1.21	500	none	0800 230 2300
Selected Reserve	1.50	1.81	1.21	500	none	0800 230 2300
Royal Bank of Scotland	3.00	3.03	2.42	2,000	none	051-458 6555
First Direct	2.06	2.06	1.85	2,000	none	071 628 6543

BUILDING SOCIETIES						
	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997-2000
Ordinary Share						
A/c	1.31	1.31	1.05	1+	none	—
Best buy — largest accs:						
Cheltenham & G	7.20	7.20	5.75	10,000 min	Post	
Cheltenham & G	7.20	7.20	5.75	25,000 min	Post	
Cheltenham & G	4.58	4.58	4.58	25,000 min	Post	
Leeds Permanent	5.44	5.44	4.35	25,000 min	90 day	
Woolwich	7.28	7.28	6.30	50,000 min	1 year	
Best buy — all accs:						
Cheltenham & G	7.20	7.20	6.00	25,000 min	Post	
Harveys Heath	5.95	5.95	4.77	25,000 min	30 day	
Cheltenham & G	5.95	5.95	6.00	50,000 min	60 day	
Leeds & P&W	7.51	7.51	6.00	10,000 min	1 year	
Greenwich	7.30	7.30	6.35	50,000 min	1 year	

NATIONAL SAVINGS						
Ordinary A/c	5.00	3.75	3.00	5-10,000	5 day	041-442-4555
Investment A/c	5.25	4.69	3.75	5-25,000	1 min	041-442-4555
Income Bond	5.00	6.00	4.80	2,000-50,000	3 mth	0283 961515
First Direct Bond	6.50	6.50	4.20	1,000-250,000		041-442-4555
First Direct Bond	5.75	5.75	5.75	100-5,000	8 day	091-386-4800
First Direct Bond	5.75	5.75	5.75	100-400/mth	14 day	091-386-4800
Children's Bond	7.75	7.85	7.85			
Gen Ed Endow	3.75	3.75	3.75			
Capital Bond	7.75	5.81	4.65	100-100,000	8 day	041-442-4555

GUARANTEED INCOME BONDS						
Prosperity	5.50	5.50	5.02	25,000 min	1 yr	Figures from
Prosperity	5.55	5.55	4.72	25,000 min	2 yrs	Chase card
Liberty Life	6.40	6.40	3.44	60,000 min	3 yrs	
Financial Ase	6.20	6.20	5.17	5,000 min	4 yrs	071 404 578
Financial Ase	6.55	6.55	6.67	5,000 min	6 yrs	for details

RATES					
RPI (Nov 91-92)	+3.0%				
Bank of England	7.50				
Personal Loan	12.50				
Credit Card	25.00				

TESSA	CAR (%)	£5,000 val 1 year car	Transfer period	Minimum investment	Telephone number
National City	8.80	£3,268.00	90 days loss int	£3,000	0372 742211
United Trust	8.40	£3,284.70	£25+2mths notice	£9,000	017 2638311
Bar Bromwich	9.00	£3,270.00	£25+1mths notice	£1	0825 813612
Coventry	9.00	£3,270.00		£1	0482 881510
Yorkshire	8.80	£3,265.00	one	£1	0526 292929

Portfolio Plus

From your Portfolio Plus card check your eight share price movements on this page only. Add them up to give you your overall total and check this against the daily total on the back of your card. Always have your card available when claiming. Game rules appear on the back of your card.

No	Company	Group	Gain or Loss
1	Bk of Ireland	Bank	1.00
2	Harwood	Industrial	1.00
3	Utd Newspapers	Newspaper	1.00
4	Grain	Transport	1.00
5	Seasol	Transport	1.00
6	British	Industrial	1.00
7	Vaux Group	Industrial	1.00
8	Evered Burton	Building	1.00
9	Body Shop	Drugs	1.00
10	CEVA	Industrial	1.00
11	Thames Water	Water	1.00
12	Landsec	Property	1.00
13	Carillion	Construction	1.00
14	British	Industrial	1.00
15	British	Industrial	1.00
16	British	Industrial	1.00
17	British	Industrial	1.00
18	British	Industrial	1.00
19	British	Industrial	1.00
20	British	Industrial	1.00
21	British	Industrial	1.00
22	British	Industrial	1.00
23	British	Industrial	1.00
24	British	Industrial	1.00
25	British	Industrial	1.00
26	British	Industrial	1.00
27	British	Industrial	1.00
28	British	Industrial	1.00
29	British	Industrial	1.00
30	British	Industrial	1.00
31	British	Industrial	1.00
32	British	Industrial	1.00
33	British	Industrial	1.00
34	British	Industrial	1.00
35	British	Industrial	1.00
36	British	Industrial	1.00
37	British	Industrial	1.00
38	British	Industrial	1.00
39	British	Industrial	1.00
40	British	Industrial	1.00

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Please take into account any minor signs

£1,000 MATCH THE SHARES

If you have ticked off your eighth share in our Match The Shares game today, claim your prize by telephoning 0254 53272 between 10.00am and 5.30pm (see the Sunday Times for full details)

The winner of the Portfolio Plus prize of £2,000 was Miss A Parry of Broadwater, West Sussex.

© Times Newspapers Ltd. Total

BANKS, DISCOUNT, HP

1992	High	Low	Company	Price	Net	Yld	P/E
1	1.00	0.98	Barclays	1.00	0.98	1.00	1.00
2	1.00	0.98	HSBC	1.00	0.98	1.00	1.00
3	1.00	0.98	London	1.00	0.98	1.00	1.00
4	1.00	0.98	Midland	1.00	0.98	1.00	1.00
5	1.00	0.98	Paragon	1.00	0.98	1.00	1.00
6	1.00	0.98	Prudential	1.00	0.98	1.00	1.00
7	1.00	0.98	Royal Bank	1.00	0.98	1.00	1.00
8	1.00	0.98	Santander	1.00	0.98	1.00	1.00
9	1.00	0.98	TSB	1.00	0.98	1.00	1.00
10	1.00	0.98	Windsor	1.00	0.98	1.00	1.00

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10	1.00	0.98	Windsor	1.00	0.98	1.00	1.00

Dull end to account

ACCOUNT DAYS: Dealings began November 30. Dealings ended yesterday. ©Contango day Monday. Settlement day December 21. Forward bargains are permitted on two previous business days. Prices recorded are at market close. Changes are calculated on the previous day's close, but adjustments are made when a stock is ex-dividend. Changes, yields and price/earnings ratios are based on middle prices.

1992 High Low Company Price Net Yld P/E

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7	1.00	0.98	Royal Bank	1.00	0.98	1.00	1.00
8	1.00	0.98	Santander	1.00	0.98	1.00	1.00
9	1.00	0.98	Standard Bank	1.00	0.98	1.00	1.00
10	1.00	0.98	Union Bank	1.00	0.98	1.00	1.00
11	1.00	0.98	Windsor	1.00	0.98	1.00	1.00
12	1.00	0.98	Yorkshire	1.00	0.98	1.00	1.00
13	1.00	0.98	Yorkshire	1.00	0.98	1.00	1.00
14	1.00	0.98	Yorkshire	1.00	0.98	1.00	1.00
15	1.00	0.98	Yorkshire	1.00	0.98	1.00	1.00
16	1.00	0.98	Yorkshire	1.00	0.98	1.00	1.00
17	1.00	0.98	Yorkshire	1.00	0.98	1.00	1.00
18	1.00	0.98	Yorkshire	1.00	0.98	1.00	1.00
19	1.00	0.98	Yorkshire	1.00	0.98	1.00	1.00
20	1.00	0.98	Yorkshire	1.00	0.98	1.00	1.00
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22	1.00	0.98	Yorkshire	1.00	0.98	1.00	1.00
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27	1.00	0.98	Yorkshire	1.00	0.98	1.00	1.00
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31	1.00	0.98	Yorkshire	1.00	0.98	1.00	1.00
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42	1.00	0.98	Yorkshire	1.00	0.98	1.00	1.00
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53	1.00	0.98	Yorkshire	1.00	0.98	1.00	1.00
54	1.00	0.98	Yorkshire	1.00	0.98	1.00	1.00
55	1.00	0.98	Yorkshire	1.00	0.98	1.00	1.00
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68	1.00	0.98	Yorkshire	1.00	0.98	1.00	1.00
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70	1.00	0.98	Yorkshire	1.00	0.98	1.00	1.00
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72	1.00	0.98	Yorkshire	1.00	0.98	1.00	1.00
73	1.00	0.98	Yorkshire	1.00	0.98	1.00	1.00
74	1.00	0.98	Yorkshire	1.00	0.98	1.00	1.00
75	1.00	0.98	Yorkshire	1.00	0.98	1.00	1.00
76	1.00	0.98	Yorkshire	1.00	0.98	1.00	1.00
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78	1.00	0.98	Yorkshire	1.00	0.98	1.00	1.00
79	1.00	0.98	Yorkshire	1.00	0.98	1.00	1.00
80	1.00	0.98	Yorkshire	1.00	0.98	1.00	1.00
81	1.00	0.98	Yorkshire	1.00	0.98	1.00	1.00
82	1.00	0.98	Yorkshire	1.00	0.98	1.00	1.00
83	1.00	0.98	Yorkshire	1.00	0.98	1.00	1.00
84	1.00	0.98	Yorkshire	1.00	0.98	1.00	1.00
85	1.00	0.98	Yorkshire	1.00	0.98	1.00	1.00
86	1.00	0.98	Yorkshire	1.00	0.98	1.00	1.00
87	1.00	0.98	Yorkshire	1.00	0.98	1.00	1.00
88	1.00	0.98	Yorkshire	1.00	0.98	1.00	1.00
89	1.00	0.98	Yorkshire	1.00	0.98	1.00	1.00
90	1.00	0.98	Yorkshire	1.00	0.98	1.00	1.00
91	1.00	0.98	Yorkshire	1.00	0.98	1.00	1.00
92	1.00	0.98	Yorkshire	1.00	0.98	1.00	1.00
93	1.00	0.98	Yorkshire	1.00	0.98	1.00	1.00
94	1.00	0.98	Yorkshire	1.00	0.98	1.00	1.00
95	1.00	0.98	Yorkshire	1.00	0.98	1.00	1.00
96	1.00	0.98	Yorkshire	1.00	0.98	1.00	1.00
97	1.00	0.98	Yorkshire	1.00	0.98	1.00	1.00
98	1.00	0.98	Yorkshire	1.00	0.98	1.00	1.00
99	1.00	0.98	Yorkshire	1.00	0.98	1.00	1.00
100	1.00	0.98	Yorkshire	1.00	0.98	1.00	1.00

RUGBY LEAGUE

BY CHRISTOPHER IRVINE

France have beaten Wales on their last five visits but appear highly vulnerable at half back and in the forwards. For Wales, Bateman in the centre and Marlow at prop are nowhere near full fitness; Moriarty and Ford are both suspect; yet Wales should pos-

Bradford Northern, in fourth place, will again be without their international scrum half, Deryck Fox, still suffering from a strained stomach muscle, for tomorrow's trip to Wakefield Trinity.

Grands prix suffer backlash

Gilbert Sabine, the Paris-Dakar rally director, told a news conference that French laws banning cigarette advertising and the economic recession were the main reasons for a big drop in entries. So far 143 cars, lorries and motorcy-

Shane Hansen, Salford's New Zealand prop, will undergo an operation today on a damaged right knee and could be out for the remainder of the season. Rochdale Hornets have signed the utility back, Darren O'Brien, from St Helens on a month's loan. He will make his debut tomorrow at scrum half at home to Carlisle.

BY RICHARD EVANS
RACING CORRESPONDENT

"With one or two exceptions, most people involved in racehorse ownership are in business in one way or the other. If you affect business, you affect people who put money into horse racing. If you want to see racing prosper again, you have to turn the economy around."



Unlike the situation in any other major racing country, they make handsome profits from racing and do not have to return a penny to the sport. The £50 million annual levy is paid by the punter and not the betting industry.

Lord Hartington's call in the Gimcrack speech this week for bookmakers to invest a "fair share" of their profits in the sport which provides them with an envi-

The crucial link between betting on racing, and what the sport receives in return, is the main task to be addressed by the new British Horseracing Board. Hartington has pointed his colleagues in the right direction. They must not flinch from seeing it through.

Second division

Blaire v Eboli Valley
Dumfries v Cross Keys
Lanarkshire v Northants
Penarth v Llandovery
Tendry Utd v Glamorgan Wanderers...
Tragedy v Aberfferry

THIRD DIVISION: Ayrton Cams v St
Helens; Bangor City Blackwood; Penrhydd
Id v Kersh Hill; Rumsby v Turfside;
Widnes v Mount Hill.

FOURTH DIVISION: David Hodge Quins
v Ruthen; Cardigan v Carmarthen; Colwynville
v Baffin Hills; Colwyn Bay v Kidwelly; Tondy
v Gamlister; Yarnon v Yarnodgysil.

Club matches

Akeshire v Silecote (2-30)
Bedford v Waseps (5-8)
Boroughmuir v Kelso (2-0)
Bristol v Moresey (3-0)
Carlisle v Strirling County (2-0)
Contesthouse v Preslles (2-0)
Dundee HSFF v Jet-Forest (2-0)
Durhamline v

Edinburgh Wanderers (2-0) ...
Edinburgh Academicals v
Glasgow High (2-0)
Exeter v Gloucester (3-0)
Fylde v Rugby (2-15)
Glasgow Academicals v
Widnes

Harrgate v Orrell (KO 2.15)
Leeds v Kendal
London Welsh v Northampton (2.15)
Met Police v Newbury
Morley v Preston Grasshoppers
Newcastle Gosforth v Gala
Northampton v London Scottish
Plymouth v Plymouth
Richmond v Bath
Rotherham v Hull Ionians (2.15)
Sale v Otley

**SEVENTH AND YOUNGS NORTH PREMIER
LEAGUE:** First division: Dartmoor University
v Wakefield; Farnley v Ardsley Edge;
Highdon Northdown v Blis Atherton; Norton
Shillinglee; Timperley
Second division: Blackburn v Swaleside; Bowdon
v Knutsford; Dleay v Stockport; Harrogate v
Southport; Liverpool v Southport; South
Yorkshire v Preston; Sheffield Barons v
Springfield; Wigan v Halifax

**EAST AND WEST MIDLANDS
LEAGUE:** Premier division: Coventry and
North Warwickshire v Hampton in Arden,
Derby v Kewley; Leicester Watlington v
Leicester; Olton and West Warwickshire v
Bridgnorth; Worcester North v Beesley.

PENINE SOUTH LEAGUE: Premier di-
vision & Kenton v Wyke; Kettering & Ly-
cambe v Beaumontshill; Lloyd's Bank v
Haywards Hawks; Macclesfield v
Old Tamestree; Old Tamestree v
Wyke; Old Whittingham v Staines; Tulse Hill
v Harpendale and Westminster; Wembleton
v Ancoats
Premier division B: Beckingham v Chas-
ter; Day of Portmuth v Tunbridge Wells;
London University v Wokingham; Worthing
Russell v Chessell; Old Eboracians v
Parkland; Old Whitcombians v Dulwich;
Oxford University v Winchester
Winchester: Woking v Gore Court;
Regionalists Hampshire and Sarum; Ar-
rington v Gore Barnes; Basingstoke v
Hamble Old Boys; Exeter v Basingstoke;
Leamington v Fleet; Met Police v Fleet; Old
Edwardians v Walton; Oxted v Walton;
Whitgifts; Oxted v Old Walcuttians
Kent and Sussex Division v Hornsea;
Eastbourne v Crowborough v Hornsea;
Greenwich; Met Sussex v BBC; Old
Brookmans v Horsham; Rochester v
Holmebeams v Bognor Regis; Ashford
v Gillingham v Bognor Poly; Sevenoaks v
Medway Barric; Tonbridge v Maidstone
Middlesex, Bucks and Oxon; Weymouth v
Mill Hill; Bracknell v Southeale Adair, Enfield
v Hayes; HCC v Havering; Hatfield v
Gerards Cross; Marlow v Claydon; Oxon;
Morris Motors v Sandhurst; NFL v Windsor,
Old Marlborough Town FC

Walsall v Salford
West of Scotland v Gurnie (2.0)
Weston-super-Mare v Towcestrians ...

PROVINCIAL INSURANCE CUP: Fourth round: London West South East; Barnet v Old Ashdensians; Cambridge v Andover; London Cornish v Old Cooperians Fifth round: London and South East; Seaford v Hove; Truro v Torquay; Millwall Boreham Wood v Basildon; Kidderminster Midway v Old Northamptonians; Old Cranleigh v Lymington; Slade Old Boys v Weymouth; South and South West; Bradford-on-Avon v Chesham Hill; Farnham Pupils; Salisbury Southern v Taunton; Stour-in-the-Wold v Impregnable; Tredworth v Littlemore North; Old Amersham v West Leeds; Strith v Strath Green; Watlington Darnley v Rye House; Windmirens v Whitey.

RUGBY LEAGUE

ACADEMY (2.0): First division: Clevedon v Sheffield Eagles; Leeds v Hull; Vaux St Helens. Second division: Bradford Bulls v Wakefield Wolves; Doncaster Thistle; Hull KR v Featherstone Rovers.

HOCKEY

PIZZA EXPRESS NATIONAL LEAGUE: First Division: Newcastle v Canterbury (Norfolk RC, 1.0); Cannock v Havant (Hants Ground, 2.0); Neasden v East Grinstead (Fulham School, 2.0); Skipton v Southgate (Kidderminster School, 1.30). Second division: Quailford v Cheshamford (Kings Manor School, 12.30); Dorchester v Harrogate Magpies (Cotswold Park, South)

Hampstead v Old Kingsnorthians
Old Loughborough v Richmond; Reading v St Albans; Teddington v Sunning; Wimbledon v Hounslow.

BASKETBALL

NATIONAL CUP: Men: Third round: Derby Blues v Oldham Celts; Hemel Hempstead Royals v West Rubens; Thames Valley Tigers v Sundridge; Worthing Balloons v Plymouth Raiders. Women: Balloons round: Camberley Golden Eagles v London M&M's; Greenwich v Sutton Topcats; Thames Valley v Milton Keynes. Finals at 7.15 p.m.

ICE HOCKEY

HEINEMAN NATIONAL LEAGUE: Premier division: Fleet Flyers v Birmingham Barons First division: Banbridge Bulldogs; Bayview Bears; Telford Tigers v Swindon Wildcats.

VOLLEYBALL

ROYAL BANK NATIONAL LEAGUE: Men: First division: Worcester v Polina; Easing Uxbridge City v Newcastle; Rothwell Tooling AYC v Team United; Eastern Levensham. Women: First division: Bolton Sale v Dynamo London; Leeds v Weston; Ashcombe Darting v London Lyra.

OTHER SPORT

BOWLING: WSC super-middle title Night Bats v Nidley Pater (Alexandra Park).

NETTIS: Winniauo World Masters; (Earls Court).

SNOOKER: World Amateurs; (Leeds)

Saturday portrait: Kenny Dalglish, by Stuart Jones, football correspondent

Anfield's adopted son who has moved on but will never walk alone

Kenneth Mathieson Dalglish, MBE, will today return to a place which will always be his spiritual home. As a player, as a manager and as a friend, he moulded the emotions of Liverpool for more than a decade.

In the dark and traumatic days which dawned after Heysel in 1984 and especially Hillsborough in 1989, his leadership shone far beyond the confines of Anfield and the game which has been his life. Liverpool's favourite adopted son matured, through two terrible tragedies, into a respected and dignified father.

When Anfield was bedecked with mementoes three years ago and spontaneously transformed into a shrine, a sight he found the saddest and most beautiful he had seen, Dalglish, now 41, recognised the depth of his commitment to the community. "I may one day leave Liverpool," he said, "but Liverpool will never leave me."

On a Friday morning in February last year, he did depart and the impact was stunning. Dalglish himself shed tears as he drove away in his white Mercedes and Liverpool could scarcely believe that he could resign when the club was, for the fourth time in his managerial reign, in contention for the double.

Nobody could then have foreseen that within two years he would come back for the first time in an official capacity with a club whose achievements this season have overshadowed the dynasty he helped to build. Blackburn Rovers this afternoon arrive at Anfield six points and eight places above Liverpool.

The motives for his sudden resignation, news of which was announced over the Tannoy in Euston station and discussed among the troops engaged in the Gulf war, were widely questioned. Dalglish, typically, offered a simple and honest reason. The strain imposed by the job was intolerable. Carrying the burden had visibly aged his predecessor, Joe Fagan, and Dalglish was immediately plunged into bewildering chaos. He was officially appointed

less than 24 hours after Heysel, the second disaster he had experienced. As a 19-year-old member of the Celtic squad, he was at Ibrox when 66 spectators lost their lives in a crush in 1971.

Within ten months of Heysel, he was celebrating an extraordinary season. Given the keys to the city of Glasgow, he was the first Scot to win 100 caps and the first player-manager to appear at Wembley. Rejoicing after winning the double, he told Craig Johnston to "make the most of it. It doesn't get better than this".

His words were prophetic. Although Liverpool collected two more titles and regained the FA Cup, their standards fell and Dalglish, with 28 cup and championship medals collected over two decades in Scotland and England,

in Liverpool's attack, recalls that he "had an unquenchable belief in his own ability".

Demonstrating the same assurance in management, he broke Anfield's most famous tradition. Chris Lawler became the first member of the boot room, where Liverpool's plans were formed, to be dismissed as Dalglish shifted the balance of power. Democracy gradually became autocracy.

The selection policy, once based on continuity, was so erratic that the players contributed to a kitty to be awarded to anyone who correctly guessed the line-up. It is said that the fund reached £50,000 before being abandoned. Even the captain, Alan Hansen, once had half the team wrong.

Hansen now appreciates that the course Dalglish plotted, though apparently haphazard, was masterful. "It kept all of us on our toes," he said. Occasionally the disruption was counter-productive, most memorably when an excessively defensive Liverpool side, without Peter Beardsley and Ray Houghton, lost 3-0 at Arsenal a few days after they had been overwhelmed 6-2 at home by Manchester United.

When Liverpool were beaten, Dalglish was not always magnanimous. "The moaningest minnie I've ever known," in John Bond's opinion, he complained particularly about the plastic pitch at Kenilworth Road. Hence the joke. What is the difference between Dalglish and a jumbo jet? The plane stops whining over Luton.

He could be acidic, too. When he heard Alex Ferguson complaining about the validity of a penalty after a fixture between Liverpool and United, he interjected, "You'll get more sense out of her," he said, nodding at Lauren, the baby he was cradling in his arms.

Dalglish, friendly to journalists but never a friend of them, changed perceptibly after the taffy FA Cup semi-final at Hillsborough. The game, which had been his world from the moment he started, ironically as a goalkeeper, at Milton Bank primary school, had temporarily lost all meaning.

'I may one day leave Liverpool, but Liverpool will never leave me'
— Kenny Dalglish, 1989

felt, for the first time in his career, the sharp barbs of criticism. He was accused of being surly and unhelpful by seekers of provocative quotes. In his defence, he explained his duty was to manage, not to be loquacious to mischievous outsiders. Besides, he had never been comfortable illuminated by the bright lights of publicity.

He shunned invitations from Celtic colleagues to visit night clubs when his reputation was growing. A native of Dalmonoch, he preferred instead the company of his girlfriend, Marina, now his wife and mother of four children. Though private, he is not diffident and was never so on the pitch.

During his first senior fixture against the said firm, Rangers, he was given the unenviable responsibility of taking a penalty. Arrangements, he interrupted his run up to tie up his bootlaces before scoring. David Johnson, later to be an ally



The manner in which he nursed the grieving club and city rightly earned him national recognition. In a radio poll to choose the person of the year, he was voted the runner-up. The winner was Wang Wei, the student who defied the tanks in Tiananmen Square.

Nobody should have been surprised either by Dalglish's compassion or by the toll the tragedy took on him. "He's warm and caring," Billy McNeill, Celtic's

former manager, once said, "not severe and calculating." Ominously, he added: "He's insular, single-minded and sets such high standards that you could never see him meeting them."

Dalglish, a conductor of the orchestra rather than a soloist, habitually overlooks deficiencies in others but the mistakes committed in the 4-4 draw at Everton in the FA Cup last year aroused such anger that he felt as though his

head was "exploding". It was to be his last match as Liverpool's manager. He turned instead to golf. Conveniently, he can use a wedge to chip from the front lawn of his Southport residence on to the links of Royal Birkdale. For months he returned home, his wife says, only to eat and sleep.

Nevertheless, the man who was "put on this earth to win", in the words of Don Revie, failed to progress. Only after Uncle Jack (Walker), as Dalglish refers to Blackburn's benefactor, had persuaded him to rekindle his passion for football was he able to reduce his handicap by one stroke to nine.

The Kop will doubtless greet him this afternoon with a familiar gesture. They used to chant his name, emphasising the final syllable as though appealing for silence. For a minute the reverence with which he will forever be held at Anfield will be audible.

CRICKET

Late change upsets New Zealanders

By OUR SPORTS STAFF

Colombo: The manager of the New Zealand touring team, Leif Dearsley, has attacked Sri Lankan officials for a last-minute decision to change a senior umpire before the second Test, which finished on Wednesday with Sri Lanka the winners by nine wickets.

"Neither I nor our senior team management were particularly happy with what happened," he said. "To get umpires changed all of a sudden... it tends to raise all sorts of speculation." Dearsley said in an after-dinner speech here on Thursday.

K. T. Francis, who had been appointed to officiate in both Tests of the series, was replaced for the second match by T. M. Amarasinghe and was, it is believed, only told on the morning of the first day of the match.

"I think it really does more harm to the umpires than to the game itself," said Dearsley. "This is not criticism but I am just saying that in time to come other teams touring here will object if such things happen again."

New Zealand's tour finishes with two one-day internationals this weekend. □ Steve Storey hit 103 as Queensland piled on the runs on the opening day of their Sheffield Shield match

against New South Wales at Sydney. The left-hander, whose previous best first-class score was 54, hit 18 fours and faced only 135 balls as he helped steer his side towards a commanding 389 for nine, following the decision by the new captain, Dirk Wellham, to bat first.

Storey was badly dropped on 35 by Michael Bevan at cover, but then proceeded to build on the earlier good work of Peter Goggin (68) and Stuart Law (77). Seven New South Wales bowlers were tried but only the medium-paced Brad McNamara, who took three for 52, emerged with much reward.

In Perth, Western Australia were frustrated by one of their former players as South Australia scored 310 for seven. James Brayshaw, who played three seasons for them before switching states last year, hit 77 as his team made the most of some poor fielding.

Noel Fieffe, dropped by Veletta at second slip when 11, made 55 and the captain, Jamie Siddons, also rode his luck in an innings of 67. □ The former England batsman, Tom Graveney, is to be the match referee for the series between West Indies and Pakistan early next year. (Agencies)

Surrey bid for the Oval

SURREY have made a bid to buy the Oval, their home since their foundation in 1845 and the ground on which Test cricket was first played in England, from the Duchy of Cornwall. The club has offered its landlords an undisclosed sum for the lease, which has 120 years still to run (Ivo Tennant writes).

The Prince of Wales will decide whether the Duchy can afford to part with an asset which brings in £50,000 in rent each year. Surrey's initial offer, made by Derek Newton, its chairman, is believed to be less than £1 million.

Newton has been advised by Healey and Baker, a firm of surveyors and estate agents who are negotiating with the Duchy. Surrey decided that as

they are spending £10 million on updating the ground over seven years, they might as well attempt to purchase it.

Rebuilding the pavilion over three winters will cost £4 million. The first stage will be finished by next summer. Around £6 million has been spent on the Bedser stand and the Barrington centre.

"For a one-off payment, this would be a worthwhile investment," a Surrey spokesman said yesterday. "We would be able to find the money." A decision on the offer is not expected until the new year.

The idea has been mooted before by Surrey at general committee meetings. The club now regards purchasing the lease as a logical step in its development plans.



Three men in a boat: Bangert, the stroke, Bernstein, centre, and Phelps show the strain on the Tideway in the beaten Blofeld eight

Four blues in the losing boat in Cambridge trial

By MIKE ROSEWELL, ROWING CORRESPONDENT
RICHARD Muirhead, a product of Westminster School, returned to tidal waters yesterday and stroked Scaramanga to a convincing win over Blofeld in the Cambridge University trial eights. Blofeld looked the more menacing crew on paper with four blues in addition to Richard Phelps, a double world championship bronze

medal-winner and Olympic finalist, whereas Scaramanga included just one blue, the president, James Behrens, although he was supported by an American Olympian in Malcolm Baker, and the British lightweight, Chris Elmlitt.

With both crews using the new "big blades", Dirk Bangert took Blofeld off the Putney start on the Surrey station at much the higher rate but had gained only a

five-foot advantage after two minutes. Muirhead then eased his crew into a slight lead on the favourable Fulham bend and by Harrods, Scaramanga, rating 31½ to Blofeld's 35, had clear water. Alexandra Cutting, the cox, was able to pick her route after Hammersmith to achieve a four-length win in a time of 19min 41sec.

Muirhead, who switched to stroke-side rowing only last

February, said: "I did not intend to lose the chance of a blue by not being able to row on both sides." He clearly impressed John Wilson, the Cambridge coach, who said: "He is a very confident guy and the best we have got at the moment."

SCARAMANGA: S Newton (Stadley and Ennervall), bow; S H Westwood (Bishop's Cleeve College, Fitzwilliam and Jesus); M E Thornton (RGS High Wycombe and Jesus); A W G Black (Monmouth School, BPC and Trinity Hall); J H J Behrens (Stadley, Reading University and

Downing); M P Baker (St Albans School, Westminster DC, Brown University and St Edmund's House); C P H Elmlitt (St Paul's School and St John's); R M Muirhead (Westminster School and Jesus), stroke; A J Cutting (Trinity School and New Hall), cox. BLOFELD: "N J" Clary (John Hereward GS and Jesus); bow; M J A Jackson (Quinde and Jesus); R J Pacey (The Judd School, Sodbrough and Corpus Christi); M R Gillard (Bedford Modern School and St Catherine's); S M Gore (Bedford College, Belfast and Jesus); R C Phelps (Lytner Upper School and St Edmund's House); J A Bernstein (Phillips Andover, Harvard and St Edmund's House); T E Bangert (Wurzberg Gymnasium, Fitzwilliam College and St John's), stroke; "A W N" Probert (University College School, King's College London and Magdalen), cox. * a blue

SNOOKER

Wattana cruises towards final place as McManus falters

By PHIL YATES

JAMES Wattana, of Thailand, established a virtually unassailable 7-1 lead over Alan McManus after a high-quality opening to their best-of-17 frame semi-final in the Coalite World Matchplay at The Dome, Doncaster, yesterday. He needed two more frames to reach the final. It was a frustrating afternoon for McManus, 21, who

beat Stephen Hendry in the previous round but has lost in the semi-finals of the Dubai Classic, Rothmans grand prix and United Kingdom championship this season.

Wattana has developed into the most accomplished overseas player since Cliff Thorburn. He set the pattern for a dramatic session when clearing from the last red to win the first frame on the black with a 35 break.

A run of 61 gave McManus, from Scotland, the second frame but he failed to score in the third. He led 6-4 in the fourth yet ran out of position on the penultimate red and was left with no alternative but to play safe.

Wattana cleared to blue, after a short safety exchange, before he potted the pink from an acute angle into a middle pocket then added the black to move 3-1 ahead.

Worse was to follow for McManus in the next frame. A 63 break seemingly put him in control but Wattana, by now exuding confidence, rifled in a long red down the side cushion to initiate a precisely constructed 64 clearance to black and earn him a 4-1 advantage.

The loss of two such consecutive frames knocked the stuffing out of the usually unflappable McManus. He

missed straightforward blacks off their spots in each of the next two frames while Wattana added runs of 37, 30, 40, 32 and 36 to guarantee a sizable interval cushion.

It left Wattana two frames short of securing a place in the final against Steve Davis today. Davis defeated Martin Clark 9-4 in the first semi-final on Thursday.

SCORE: Semi-final: J Wattana (Tha) leads A McManus (Scot), 7-1.

FOOTBALL

Robbins is ready for a full-time challenge

NON-LEAGUE REVIEW BY WALTER GAMMIE

AFTER seeing his player-manager, Terry Robbins, poach a typically sharp goal in Welling United's match against Woking on Tuesday, Graham Hobbins, the general manager, said with satisfaction: "When Terry was appointed, people asked whether it would affect his form. It has been scoring a lot more goals."

Robbins has, in fact, scored seven goals as Welling, in an unbeaten run of six matches, have set behind them a start to the season that brought five straight defeats in the GM Vauxhall Conference and cost Nicky Bridgen the job of manager after an FA cup defeat at Kingstons.

At 27, Robbins will take the plunge into full-time management in the new year, giving up his job as a unit trust administrator. Earlier this year he had considered giving up the game because he was not seeing enough of his family, having felt that he had fulfilled himself by winning his first England semi-professional cap last season as well as finishing joint leading scorer in the Conference with 29 goals.

Hobbins, the manager for 17 years until Bridgen succeeded him in 1986, said: "I had hoped that Ray Burgess would take over but he didn't want to. We're a family club, Terry had been with us for six years and I didn't want to go outside. Things are working very well. Terry's very popular with the supporters. He asked me a lot of questions about the general running of the football club, from the wage bill to finding sponsors, but he's got his own opinions and is very determined."

Burgess acts as Robbins's assistant. "Ray takes over on match days," Robbins said. "I might say a few words at 1.50 and then Ray will be in charge, leaving me to concentrate on my game." With Theo Foley also helping with coaching, the support for Robbins is strong.

North London rivals face dilemma

Tottenham bank
on Bergsson for
sweeping success

By LOUISE TAYLOR

TO SWEEP or not to sweep? That was the dilemma facing the management of Arsenal and Tottenham Hotspur yesterday as they prepared for the north London derby at White Hart Lane this afternoon.

Local rivalry is renewed against a backdrop of three straight defeats for Arsenal. Tottenham have lost their last two games and the desire not to fall again on an all-important occasion provoked a flurry of tactical planning in both camps.

Such strategic forecasts may have been plotted on two separate training grounds in different parts of Hertfordshire but the interested parties came to strikingly similar conclusions.

The consensus seemed to be that a sweeper system could prove the key to Premier League points. Tottenham include Gudni Bergsson in their squad for the first time this season and he is expected to start as spare man to combat the attacking acceleration of Ian Wright and Kevin Campbell.

David O'Leary could well be deployed in the same role for Arsenal, who hope Nigel Winterburn will be passed fit to start his first game for seven weeks at left back. If not, Pal Tyrkelsen could don the No. 3 shirt.

Whatever their line-up or formation, Arsenal will run out at White Hart Lane with history on their side. During George Graham's six years as manager at Highbury, his team have lost only once in 12 league meetings with Tottenham. In retaliation, Tottenham are quick to point out that they beat Arsenal 3-1 in the 1991 FA Cup semi-final at Wembley.

Today, Graham is without his injured England right back, Dixon, and centre forward, Smith. Apart from peering over such cracks — does he, for instance, give Linighan a rare first-team outing in central defence? — he must also decide whether to start the infuriatingly inconsistent Sweden international, Limpar, on the wing or use Flatts, a homegrown youngster.

With Limpar in mind, Graham — whose side lost 2-0 at Southampton last Saturday — said: "The only thing we need is more consistency from quality players."

"We've got the quality, and are still only two points off the second team in the league, but ability without consistency is no use. We've had a long look at ourselves this week."

"Only Norwich are showing real consistency in the Premier League this season, and they deserve great credit, but I know we are capable of still challenging them at the top when we play to our full capabilities."

Two players to have frequently fulfilled their optimum potential this season are Tony Adams, the Arsenal central defender and captain, and Neil Ruddock, the Tottenham centre half.

The pair regularly meet for a drink but will temporarily suspend their close friendship today.

The word suspension could be looming large in both of their minds tonight, though. Both are one booking removed from a two-game ban.

By the time Adams and Ruddock were to serve their punishments, Howells, Allen and Durie should be restored to full fitness and the Tottenham first team. All three face fitness tests today but are probably at least one reserve match away from a return.

Durie was yesterday the subject of transfer speculation linking him with Rangers, the club he supports, but any such move was emphatically ruled out by Terry Venables, Tottenham's chief executive.

Doug Livermore, the Tottenham coach, is certainly not in the mood to forfeit any more leading lights. As he said yesterday: "We have lost stars like Paul Gascoigne, Paul Stewart and Gary Lineker and it is a transitional time for the club."

"We are appreciative of the supporters' patience and we want to give them an early Christmas present by beating Arsenal."

Stevens is sidelined
for up to six weeks

RANGERS' defence of their Scottish League title suffered a setback yesterday when their former England full back, Gary Stevens, was ruled out for up to six weeks. The defender missed only two league games in the previous three campaigns, but his luck has changed for the worse this year.

He was sidelined for the first 24 games with a stress fracture of a foot and was just halfway through his fourth comeback game against Airdrie recently when he received a stress fracture of a knee.

And Rangers' attempt to buy Gordon Durie has been rejected by Terry Venables, the chief executive of Tottenham Hotspur. "Nothing is happening," Venables said.

Across London, Gerry Fran-

cis, the manager of Queens Park Rangers, rebutted overtures from Liverpool for Les Ferdinand, his striker who has been included in the England squad this season. "Les is going nowhere," Francis said. Liverpool could now switch their attention to Paul Kinson, the Derby County forward and an England under-21 international who arrived at the Baseball Ground for £1.3 million from Leicester City last season.

Three players have been put on the transfer-list by the West Ham United manager, Billy Bonds, in an attempt to raise cash at the first division club. West Ham's former captain, Tony Gale, the midfield player, Ian Bishop, and the forward, Mike Small, are all up for sale.



The only way is up: Jo Turner takes on the 60ft wall in preparation for the climbing world cup finals at the National Indoor Arena, Birmingham, this weekend. More than 150 competitors from 20 countries will take part. Britain's aspirations in the men's competition rest with a newcomer, Ian Vickers, from Darwen in Lancashire. The 18-year-old, after a rapid ascent of the domestic ranks, will be hoping to improve on his world ranking of eleventh in his first world cup. Among the top contenders are the

champion, Francois Legrand, of France, the Japanese, Yuji Hirayama, and the Swiss, Frederic Nicole.

In the women's section, Britain's best chances rest with Felicity Butler, 33, nationally ranked No. 1 and internationally tenth, and Rachel Farmer. The favourites are Robyn Ernsfield, of the United States, Susi Good (Switzerland) and Isabelle Patissier (France).

Love of the peaks, Weekend Times, page 11

Mystery
over
'missing'
horse

By OUR RACING STAFF

ONE of racing's most intriguing mysteries was puzzling the sport last night following the disappearance of a horse from a field near Lingfield racecourse and her sale for 92,000 Irish guineas in co. Kildare a week later.

The appropriately named Fantasy To Reality had been looked after by Sue Addington-Smith on her farm in Surrey for two months before disappearing on December 2.

Mrs Addington-Smith went out to dinner with friends that night and returned at 10pm, checking, as she always did, that her horses were fine.

Fantasy To Reality, a four-year-old half-sister to Lyrac Fantasy, the fastest two-year-old British racing has seen for years, was not there.

The police were informed and a "stolen" report logged. By coincidence, Lyrac Fantasy went through the sales ring at Newmarket for 340,000 guineas the same day.

The mystery deepened when Matthew Jones, who had introduced Fantasy To Reality's owner, a fellow Irishman, Anthony O'Gorman, to Mrs Addington-Smith, could not be contacted. Neither could O'Gorman.

Two days later, Mrs Addington-Smith's bank returned a cheque for £431 which O'Gorman had given her for looking after the horse; the bank stated that the account on which it was drawn had been closed.

Fantasy To Reality resurfaced at Goffs sales in Ireland on Wednesday of this week and was sold for 92,000 Irish guineas to Jim Brown, of Mercury Bloodstock, acting on behalf of an American-based client.

The price was deemed very high: between 10,000 and 25,000 Irish guineas had seemed realistic for the unbroken filly.

Goffs sales director Robert Griffin said that Fantasy To Reality's papers had been checked and found to be in order but admitted: "It seems an awful lot of money to pay for her."

O'Gorman said yesterday: "I've had the filly a year and a half, entered her in the sales two or three months ago, and she has been advertised extensively by Goffs. I am down as the owner. It is the filly, it is her."

Embracing
way to pay
lip-service

The antics that greet a goal, even at football's humblest level, would have brought down the unquenchable wrath of the Lord Chamberlain had they been performed on stage only a short while ago. Now I hear that passionate celebrations have been taken to a new level as a scandal has swept Germany.

It all began last Saturday, when Eintracht Frankfurt played Kaiserslautern in a televised game. Dietmar Roth scored the second goal to clinch the match. So delighted were he and his colleague, Axel Kruse, that they exchanged a kiss that was not only on the television, but also on the mouth. So graphic was the exchange that several thousand viewers telephoned the television station to express their horror.

The story has been front page news in Bild newspaper, and the wives, Tatiana Kruse

and Andrea Roth, have been quoted, expressing grave suspicions of the nature of their husbands' sexuality.

Rematch on ice

More on the joke sport of ice hockey. A new punch-up has erupted just 37 seconds into the recent match between Detroit Red Wings and New York Rangers. It was between Bob Probert and Tie Domi, lasted for a full minute, 60 blows were exchanged and the television station analysed it as if it were a professional boxing match.

"The fight was one of the best," Don Cherry, of Canadian television, said. "It was a good battle, and the officials let it go. I knew they would."

The sport is divided as to whether such punch-ups — this one was actually given advance publicity, since it was a rematch of an occasion when Domi had bloodied Probert — are "classic hockey entertainment" or "exactly the kind of thing we don't want," as the anti-fighting campaigners have it. According to the television station, Probert won.

SIMON BARNES
Sporting diary

More ice hockey news: and a triumph for a referee called Glenn Meier. He had the rink announcer sent off at a match between Bracknell Bees and Murrayfield Racers, in this country's Heineken League premier division.

"The heavy sarcasm he used made a mockery of my decision," Meier said. The announcer, Darren Bavester, has been accused of "bringing the game into disrepute". I would have thought such a thing was impossible.

Post haste

David Gower is a walking example of one of Fleet Street's oldest sayings: loyalty is what they screw you with. Now I hear that MCC is putting all kinds of pressure on the pro-Gower campaigner, Dennis Oliver.

He has been given a near-impossible deadline to complete papers to be sent to the 17,400 members. Oliver described it as "a sword of Damocles". The papers are being prepared by Donald Treford. I don't know how good he is against the clock.



Basic ingredient

This week's post-winning liner-erick comes from David Lilley, who drags the entire competition down to the Lin-erick's traditional level of mild salaciousness.

An opening batsman in Stoke. Thought his wife was just having a joke. But she sued for divorce. And won it, of course. On the grounds that he offered no stroke.

I still have a bottle or two of Calem Colheitas 1978 for any more works of genius.

Master's notes

An interesting rarity comes up for auction at Sotheby's on Monday: a hand-written note from Muhammad Ali. It is a note for the speech he gave at a press conference on March 4, 1978, at the Waldorf-Astoria in New York. This was, inevitably, a nationally televised event: the cornerstone of Ali's campaign for a an immediate rematch with Leon Spinks. As it was unusual for Ali to make notes, the document is expected to fetch around £5,000.

Mundane progress for Stich

FROM ANDREW LONGMORE, TENNIS CORRESPONDENT, IN MUNICH

A YEAR of disappointment could yet turn to gold for Michael Stich at the Grand Slam Cup in his home town of Munich. The German came to within two victories of the \$2 million jackpot last night, defeating Richard Krajicek 7-6, 7-5 in an hour and 34 minutes.

There was only one break in the match, in the last game, when Stich, having missed three match points in the previous game, drilled a backhand pass which Krajicek, at full stretch, could only mishit into the net. The rest was less than distinguished, the tennis equivalent of a 12-round mail on the ropes between two hard-punching heavyweights.

Stich won on points just. Krajicek started Stich's year off on a sour note, beating the then Wimbledon champion in a see-saw duel over five sets on the main court in Melbourne. Stich was less than generous in his assessment of the Dutchman afterwards, suggesting that he had lost the match and that Krajicek had done nothing to win it.

Krajicek's response was simply itself. "That's right," he said. "I won, he lost." The needle has been there since.

That rather set the tone for the German's ill-tempered year, during which he has slipped steadily down the rankings, won just a single title — in Rosmalen — and lost his Wimbledon crown. His shoulders have been in a permanent slump, lifted only on the doubles court where he has won Olympic gold, with Boris Becker, and a second Wimbledon title, with John McEnroe.

For the rest of the time, his mind has been elsewhere. Since Wimbledon, he has been married and played just 13 matches, winning seven. Only once has he beaten a player ranked in the top ten, though it was a comprehensive and significant victory, 6-1, 6-1, over Becker in Hamburg. Much to the relief of the German nation, that humiliation persuaded Becker to get serious about the business of playing tennis again. It was not difficult to predict

the tempo of this match. In their six meetings dating back to the French Open last year, three on clay, there have been seven tie-breaks. Before last night, Stich lead that series 4-3 and the overall head-to-heads by 4-2. This was their first encounter on a fast indoor surface, which encouraged stalemate.

The first set took 47 minutes, included no rallies, no break points and no deuces. For the connoisseurs of the service, it was heaven; for the good people of Munich, it was rather less than enthralling.

The inevitable tie-break came after 40 minutes, a forehand pass giving the Dutchman a hair's breadth advantage, which he could not hold. Once again, his volleying, which veers between the sublime and the ridiculous, let him down and Stich edged in front 7-4 in the tie-break.

Asked if he thought the match boring, Stich at least was honest. "I would have to agree," he said.

McEnroe's legacy, page 27



young CULLINGHAM would Never Pass the TAYLORS to the Right AGAIN....



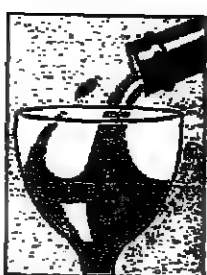
TAYLOR'S PORT
BEST taken Seriously



TELEVISION

Nigella Lawson on misfits and drunks

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CHRISTMAS WINE

Our guide to best supermarket buys

Page 4



WHAT TO WEAR

Children's party games and gear

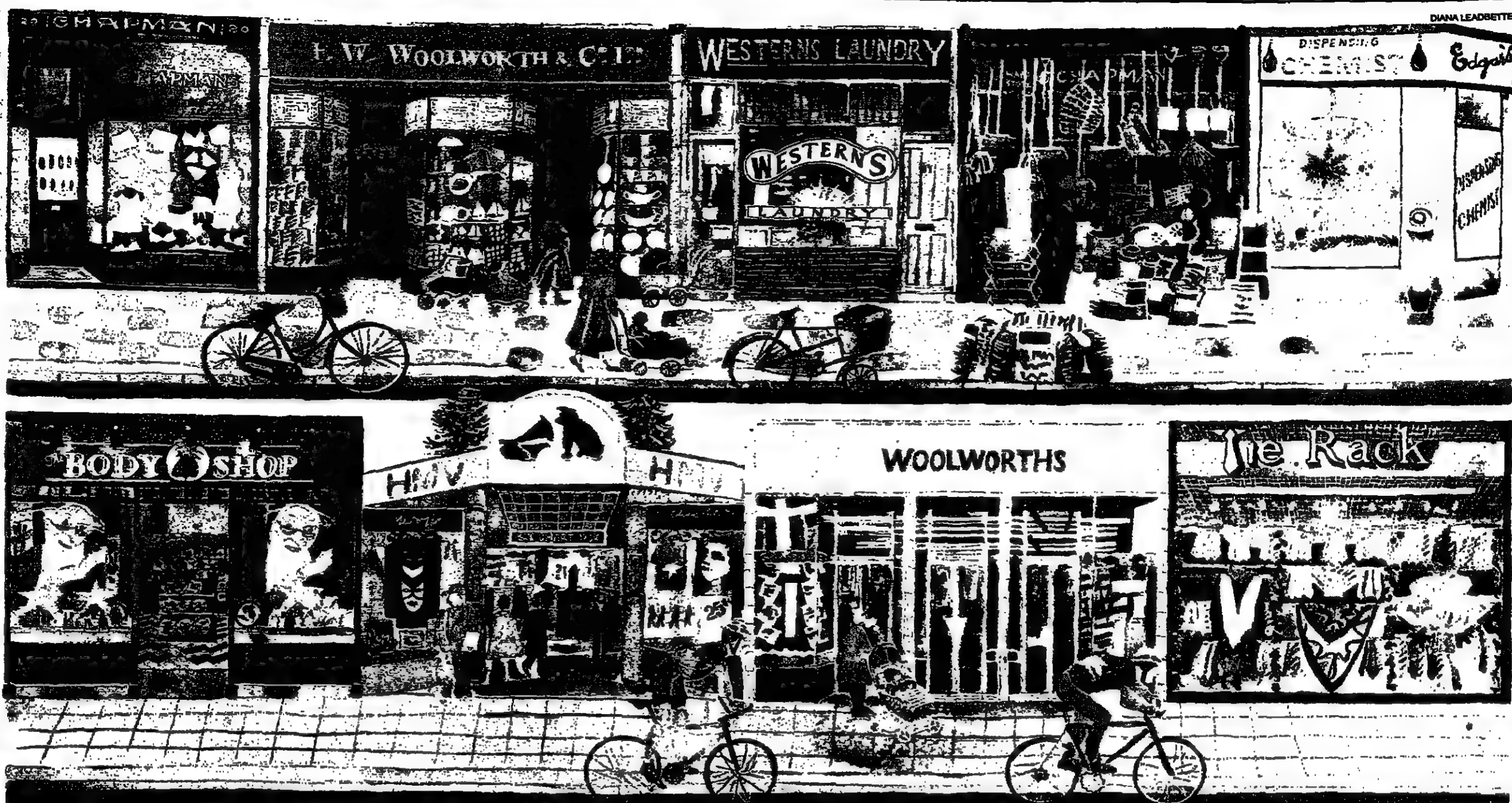
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EXCLUSIVE
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OFFER
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WEEKEND

3

THE TIMES SATURDAY DECEMBER 12, 1992



Old times, good times: in the 1950s (top) craftsmanship was preserved in the integrity and detail of building design, but in the 1980s and 1990s (below) bright lights, garish colours and clashing typefaces have taken its place

Do you have a moment? Take a quick squint at this dream. It is no ordinary dream. It has Peter Brooke in it.

He looks aghast: he looks dumbfounded; he has got his Deputy Dawg face on again. Racked with mute melancholy, our great heritage secretary has manifestly suffered an extremely nasty turn. Now he speaks: "The Queen is deeply distressed. I am deeply distressed. The entire nation is deeply distressed. But be assured, no expense will be spared to effect a total restoration. Your government will foot the bill. The appalling destruction behind me" (and here he waves a vague but affectingly distraught hand) "shall, I give you my solemn promise, be healed, the grievous loss to our national heritage shall be made good, so that our children and our children's..."

And, now, as the camera pulls back and pans away towards the devastation whereof he bumbles, we see that he is standing in a suburban London high street. We see, furthermore, that his unadvised remarks are spot on. Someone has given the place a right going-over. Once a paragon of Interwar Meritocratic style, a mile or so of handsome redbrick and tile-hung curves extending from, say, one of Charles Holden's magnificent Underground stations to, say, the neo-Georgian restraint of one of George Temple's imposing primary schools, with all the little shops between fashioned to a design-consistency that would, in

1938, have had Nash himself turning self-congratulatory cartwheels in Elysium for the lessons he had taught and others had learnt, the high street is now a dog's dinner. It is a spatchcock gallimaufry of disparate eyesores. It looks as though its civic planners had strewn it from a bucket.

That second sequence is not a dream. I know that, because I walked the tacky length of one such street last Saturday, four decades after I had last walked the then charming length of it, on little legs. The prefatory dream sequence materialised only later, as I was driving morosely away from Southgate down the North Circular Road and reminding myself that desecrated suburbia was not what heritage secretaries fretted over. While £60 million must be raised in order that our liege lady may have returned to her the landscape of her childhood, nobody will rattle the tin to do the same for me. And, since I dare speak for them, umpteenth like me, because there are umpteenth high streets like Southgate's, and they have all been trashed.

This is not nostalgia. I do not regret the passing of the austere days when a bob-jobbing cub could be dispatched to the high street with one of Mr Attlee's ration books, to queue in the sleet outside Renshaw the baker for a small grey

While others loudly lament the Windsor fire, Alan Coren resents the greater destruction of our high streets

loaf before shuffling next door to queue outside Salter the butcher for a nice piece of whale, any more than I regret the passing of the days when dentists spent half an hour with a brace and his drilling holes in your unanaesthetised head. What I regret is the wanton and unnecessary despoliation of an entire age of quality British architecture: one, moreover, which might well have been the last of such amplitude and consistency that we shall ever see.

I can see it on my carpet, now. In 1949, for successfully negotiating the eleven-plus, my father gave me a camera. I hung it round my neck and, scribbled off to capture Southgate's high street for a poster. I did not think about them; but since I have become that poster, now, I dug the curling snapshots out this morning and laid them, row on row, beside the ones I took last Saturday as reference for this piece.

They sit unsettlingly together; the carpet might have been set up for a forum of plastic surgeons, convened to deliberate anxiously upon a singularly botched-up cosmetic operation. Were Southgate a

woman, she would sue for every penny she could get, and she would unquestionably get it.

Cosmetic, because as I compare picture with picture, building with building, 1949 with 1992, what is most irritatingly evident is that the ruin, while major in its aesthetic effect, was minor in its structural intervention. The ratbags responsible did so little, to do so much. For if (as Gropius insisted we all should, when entering an unfamiliar townscape) you restrict your inspection to the first storey and above, you will see from these photographs how little has changed in 50 years. It is only when the eye drops to the ground floor that it narrows, rolls, weeps and generally carries on the way an affronted eye will.

Above, the 1930s brickwork is more or less intact, assured of line and subtle of ornament, quietly confident stuff giving off a smack of grace under no particular pressure, expressed in the grace notes of rusticated quoins and string-courses and diaper-work and vousoirs, and all those other discreet embellishments of craft

rather than art which bespeak the hands of master bricklayers travelling to the designs of architects ambitious for no larger immortality than an individualising signature on a commercial commission. I like stuff like that. In giving suburbia its minor architectural distinction, it expressed the spirit of the place.

Now drop your eyes to the two sets of ground floors. In 1949, the shop-fronts were flawlessly consistent with the structure above, windows and doors measured, shaped and framed to complement the size and tenor not merely of their own buildings, but of the entire parade: the materials — brick, wood, cement, ceramic tiling, brass furniture, paint, and all the rest — formally selected, the tradesmen's names displayed in individual three-dimensional letters typefaced to counterpoint the architecture, and everything down to the last doorknob, mosaic mat and awning handle a testament to quality-controlled holism.

Now look at 1992. Not one such front remains. And I mean "such". I do not ask to see the same shops there, I accept that Timothy White and Taylor have gone to their long

home, and that many another resonant tradesman is pushing up daisies. That is the way it is for those who occupy their business in great waters, sometimes you can't keep your head above them. But when their successors laid out their stalls, why were they allowed to do so beneath plastic printed facades in a hundred different colours and as many clashing typefaces, until the whole became nothing of the kind, merely a disparate anthology

of the worst shopfront design of 30 years? Why were they allowed to chisel out the original tiling, replace the original windows and doors, demolish the original pillars, dig up the original mosaics? Why, when the original parades required extension, was the work put in the hands of Legomaniacs who...

Don't write in, I know why. But when you're forking out to put the Windsor ceiling back so that foreign dignitaries can have something nice to look up from the soup at, spare, if not a penny, at least a passing thought for what has happened to the somewhat broader heritage beyond.

Alan Coren's column is on page 6

Save our suburbia

Love blooms in the shape of a Lada

Forget the specifications, choosing a new car is all in the heart

I have often wished that, like my sister, I had done a car-maintenance course at evening school so that garage men could not dupe me. As it is, I have not yet passed my driving test after 40 lessons so I have delayed enrolment. Nevertheless, we still have a car in our household and, as my husband hasn't done the course either, every so often we are duped by garage men.

The three came round again this week when we had to put on our thinking hats in order to buy a new car. The 1978 Volvo — kindly passed on to my mother, who had only generated 6,000 miles in eight years — had generated another 140,000 in three years and the "drive belts have had it".

I was keen to repair the drive belt, but a chorus of adamant voices around me urged: "Don't throw good money after bad." Why people think that spending £300 rather than £6,000 to get a working car is throwing good money after bad I cannot understand. But even the RAC man said it would be folly to "throw good money after bad", as we peered noddingly into the bonnet with him, pretending we

knew what he was talking about.

"And basically you can't move for small car bargains at the moment. And most are at 'clear the forecourt' prices," parroted my husband, adopting a "normal bloke" persona for dealing with the RAC knight of the road.

For as long as I can remember we have driven bangers. Our first car was a black Volkswagen Beetle bought from our best friends so that we knew we wouldn't be duped. It served us well until fumes from the engine began to pour in through the heaters! Somehow the decision was arrived at that the garage man would simply take out the heater, rather than repair it. He was an Armenian named Gaby, whose contempt for us was unbecomingly clear. "Can you change the oil?" we once asked pleasantly. "Change it yourself," he answered.

We carried on driving, wrapped in duvets and blankets with hot water bottles through windchill



WEEKEND
voice

MARY
KILLEN

factors of minus ten degrees inside the car. A friend pointed out that the brain could no longer function at these temperatures. When the brakes went, other people decided that we should not "throw good money after bad" and we left it in Devon where it had broken down. The garage man gave us £50 for its "scrap value, but really I'm taking it off your hands — it's going to cost me to get rid of it".

It was clear to me later that we had been duped again as I looked through a car magazine and saw used Beetle parts being advertised for sale at high prices.

With the Volvo out of commission, the two of us set off to our local garage and test-drove a Ford Fiesta.

"What about fuel economy?" my husband asked, pre-empting the salesman's cliché by saying: "There again, having said that, basically at the end of the day we get what we paid for".

Last Sunday, my husband saw an advertisement for the Proton, costing from £6,790 with very attractive financing deals, and arranged a test drive. "What we really want is a car that costs nothing," he declared bossily to the salesman. "What with so many cars being on the market at 'clear the forecourt' prices..."

Then I saw it, in the same showroom as the Proton — the car of my dreams: old-fashioned, boxy, and in a weird sludgy shade of blue from Eastern Europe. A Lada Riva estate, £5,450.

I literally fell in love with it. There is a high position and clear views through the windscreen. "I like the

"hungry" 42 cu ft of luggage space," my husband told the salesman, David. "We can sleep in it."

Armed with his *Which?* guide to new and used cars he waded in — solemnly reading the literary aloud. "For cheap second-hand. Against: poor value new. Loses value fast, unreliable and rust prone, generally unpleasant to drive."

David, no doubt inured to wallies with *Which?* guides, gave a spirited defence.

Still reading from the guide, my husband said: "Dealers expect you to haggle — don't pay the full price for a new car. Our agent, buying anonymously, beat the dealer down by £2,500."

David waited patiently, then pointed out that the £2,500 was a discount on a £20,000 car. For a £5,450 car, a discount of £250 was more like it.

We have rung round and, despite people's advice about the Lada's swift depreciation in value, we somehow don't care. It's the comforting shape that we love, like a child's drawing of a car. We can only hope that nobody will be able to tell us in the near future. "They obviously saw you coming."

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FILM

BLADE RUNNER (15): The improved "director's cut" of Ridley Scott's influential vision of a dark, hellish L.A., infested with rebel androids. Harrison Ford, Rutger Hauer. Gate (071-727 4043) MGM Fulham Road (071-370 2636) MGM Shaftesbury Avenue (071-836 6279/379 7025) Screen on the Green (071-226 3520).

THE CRYING GAME (18): IRA gunman becomes obsessed with a hostage's girlfriend. Bold, powerful Neil Jordan film that fathers at the close. Stars Stephen Rea, Forest Whitaker, Jaye Davidson. Chelsea (071-351 3742/3743) Curzon Phoenix (071-240 9561) MGM Haymarket (071-439 1527).

DEATH BECOMES HER (PG): Meryl Streep and Goldie Hawn battle to attain eternal youth. Ice-cold black comedy, ultimately swamped by special effects. Stars Bruce Willis, director, Robert Zemeckis. Camden Parkway (071-267 7034) Empire (071-497 9999) MGM Baker Street (071-935 9772) MGM Fulham Road (071-370 2636) MGM Trocadero (071-434 0031) UCI Whiteleys (071-792 3332).



Gypsy: Ciaran Fitzgerald in the film *Into the West*

ELLYA (PG): Simple, direct war-time tale of a Welsh girl and an injured German airman. Strong feature debut by director Steve Gough; subtle child performance by Pascale Deleforge Jones. Renoir (071-837 8402).

GLENGARRY GLEN ROSS (15): Real-estate salesman fight for their lives. Energetic version of David Mamet's play, though Jack Lemmon goes over the top. Co-starring Al Pacino, Ed Harris; director, James Foley. MGM Paterson Street (071-930 0631) MGM Trocadero (071-434 0031) Odeons: Kensington (0426 914666) Swiss Cottage (0426 914098).

HOME ALONE 2: LOST IN NEW YORK (PG): More of the same, with extra crudity and a horrid new streak of sentimentality. Macaulay Culkin, Joe Pasco, Daniel Stern. Director, Chris Columbus. Odeon Marble Arch (0426 914 501) Odeon West End (0426 915574).

HUSBANDS AND WIVES (15): Woody Allen's best film in years, a lacerating tale of collapsing New York marriages. Stars Allen, Mia Farrow, Judy Davis, Liam Neeson, Juliette Lewis. MGM Paterson Street (071-930 0631) Minskia (071-235 4225) Odeons: Mezzanine (0426 915683) Renoir (071-837 8402).

INTO THE WEST (PG): Two gypsy children ride a mysterious white horse into western Ireland. Wayward but engaging; good for older children. Gabriel Byrne, Ellen Barkin. Director, Mike Newell. Odeon Haymarket (0426 915533).

THE LAST OF THE MOHICANS (12): Romance and adventure in the American colonies with frontiersman Daniel Day-Lewis. Shallow version of the classic novel; director Michael Mann. With Madeleine Stowe, Russell Means. Camden Parkway (071-267 7034) MGM Fulham Road (071-370 2636) MGM Haymarket (071-839 1527) MGM Shaftesbury Avenue (071-836 6279/379 7025) MGM Trocadero (071-434 0031) UCI Whiteleys (071-792 3332).

OF MICE AND MEN (PG): Steinbeck's classic Depression tale of friendship and innocence. John Malkovich as the slow-witted Lennie; director Gary Sinise as his protector. Simple, sturdy and moving. Curzon West End (071-439 1405) MGM Fulham Road (071-370 2636) MGM Trocadero (071-434 0031).

PETER'S FRIENDS (15): College pals meet up after a decade for a glib mixture of laughter and tears. Kenneth Branagh directs Emma Thompson, Stephen Fry,

Rita Rudner and himself. Luminaria (071-836 0691) MGM Chelsea (071-352 5096) MGM Tottenham Court Road (071-434 0031) Minskia Hill Coronet (071-727 6705) Odeons: Kensington (0426 914666) Swiss Cottage (0426 914098) Plaza (071-497 9999) Screen on Baker Street (071-935 2772) UCI Whiteleys (071-792 3332).

SINGLE WHITE FEMALE (18): New roommate proves a crackpot. Nicely atmospheric, but the crudities mount. Bridget Fonda, Jennifer Jason Leigh; director, Barbet Schroeder. MGM Chelsea (071-352 5096) Odeons: Kensington (0426 914666) Leicester Square (0426 915683) Swiss Cottage (0426 914098) UCI Whiteleys (071-792 3332).

SISTER ACT (PG): Whoopi Goldberg hides out in a convent. Contrived but disarming, warm-hearted comedy. Director, Emile Ardolino. MGM Baker Street (071-935 9772) MGM Chelsea (071-352 5096) MGM Oxford Street (071-636 0310) Odeons: Kensington (0426 914666) Swiss Cottage (0426 914098) West End (0426 915574) UCI Whiteleys (071-792 3332).

SLACKER (15): College-age layabouts in Austin, Texas, vent crazy thoughts on life, the sun and UFOs. Striking debut by film-maker Richard Linklater, with an amateur cast. Metro (071-437 0757).

STRICTLY BALLROOM (PG): One dancer's fight to defy the rules. Eloquent, intoxicating debut by director Baz Luhrmann. With Paul Mercurio, Tara Moric. MGM Chelsea (071-352 5096) MGM Oxford Street (071-636 0310) Odeons: Kensington (0426 914666) Mezzanine (0426 915683) Swiss Cottage (0426 914098) Plaza (071-497 9999) Renoir (071-837 8402) Screen on Baker Street (071-935 2772) UCI Whiteleys (071-792 3332).

TRACES OF RED (15): Sex, murder and corruption in Palm Beach. Ferociously dull thriller with James Belushi, Lorraine Bracco. Director, Andy Wolk. MGM Oxford Street (071-636 0310) MGM Paterson Street (071-930 0631).

THEATRE

LONDON

ANNIE GET YOUR GUN: Irving Berlin's pre-feminist musical is no model for a Nineties woman but the songs are simply terrific. Principal Wales, Coventry Street, W1 (071-839 5897). Tues-Sat, 7.30pm, mats Thurs, Sat, Sun, 3pm.

BARNUM: Paul Nicholas walks the tightrope in Christmas revival of the Cy Coleman/Michael Stewart showbiz musical. Dominion, Tottenham Court Road, W1 (071-580 8845). Preview from Mon, 7.30pm. Opens Thurs, 7pm. Then Mon-Sat, 7.30pm. Mats Wed and Sat, 3pm.

BILLY LIAIR: After 11 weeks on the road the Keith Waterhouse/Wills Hall wry comedy enjoys a London season. Paul Weller plays the underdog's assistant with a burgeoning fantasy life. National Theatre (Cottesloe), South Bank, SE1 (071-928 2252). Previews today, 2.30pm and 7.30pm, Mon 7.30pm. Opens Tues, 7pm. Then in repertory.

DYLAN THOMAS: RETURN JOURNEY: Bob Kingdon's tour de force as the spellbinding, doomed poet. Directed by Anthony Hopkins. Lyric Studio, King Street, Hammersmith, W6 (081-741 8701). Preview Mon, 8pm. Opens Tues, 7pm. Then most evens 8pm, mats at various times, incl. Sun Dec 27 at 2.15pm and 4.45pm. Until Jan 2.

HAMLET: Kenneth Branagh returns to the RSC to play the Prince, with splendid supporting cast directed by Adrian Noble. Plays four and a half hours. Barbican, Barbican Centre, EC2 (071-638 8891). Previews from tonight, 6.30pm. Opens Fri, 6.30pm. Then in repertory.

HAY FEVER: Very funny performances (not always where you expect) in Coward's excellent comedy. Albany, St Martin's Lane, WC2 (071-857 1115). Mon-Sat, 8pm, mats, Thurs, Sat, 3pm.

AN IDEAL HUSBAND: Anna Carteret, Hannah Gordon and Martin Shaw in Wilde's "insider dealing" melodrama. Some dated assumptions but stylishly done. Globe, Shaftesbury Avenue, W1 (071-494 5055). Mon-Sat, 7.45pm, mats, Thurs, Sat, 4pm.

MADNESS IN VALENCIA: Touting production of a 1607 Lope de Vega: two lovers take refuge in a lunatic asylum. Are the mad saner than the sane? Sounds bang up to date. Gate, 11 Pembroke Road, W11

(071-229 5587). Previews Tues and Wed, 7.30pm. Opens Thurs, 7.30pm. Then Mon-Sat, 7.30pm. Until Jan 16.

OUR SONGS: Peter O'Toole in Keith Waterhouse's play about a menopausal male's infatuation with a young woman. Nearly done though we only hear the man's point of view. Apollo, Shaftesbury Avenue, W1 (071-494 5070). Mon-Fri, 8.15pm, Sat, 6pm and 8.45pm.

THE PRISONER OF ZENDA: David Hagg plays the dashing Rudolph Rassendyl, spitting image of the King of Ruritania, in the best of all romantic adventures. Greenwich Theatre, Crooms Hill, SE10 (081-558 7753). Previews from Thurs, 7.45pm. Opens Dec 21, 7pm. Then Mon-Sat, 7.45pm. Mats Sat, 2.30pm, except Boxing Day and Dec 28, 3.30pm.

THREE BIRDS LAUGHING ON A FIELD: Harriet Walter perfect again in revival of this subtle, comic state-of-the-nation play. Royal Court, Soane Square, SW1 (071-730 1745). Mon-Sat, 8pm, mat Sat, 4pm.

TRAVELS WITH MY AUNT: Simon Cadell, John Wells, Richard Kane, Christopher Gee play all 26 parts in Giles Haverley's marvellous adaptation of Graham Greene's novel. Wyndham's, Charing Cross Road, WC2 (071-857 1116). Mon-Fri, 8pm, Sat, 8.15pm, mats Wed, 3pm, Sat, 5pm.

TREASURY OF THE WELLS: Pinero's comedy about theatre folk in mid-Victorian London. Successful only in parts and the minor parts at that. Stars Michael Hordern and Sarah Brightman. Comedy, Penton Street, SW1 (071-867 1045). Previews from Tues, 7.30pm; opens Dec 7, 7pm; then Mon-Sat, 7.30pm, mats Wed and Sat, 2.30pm.

WHICH WITCH: Norwegian opera-musical on the murky doings in Renaissance Europe. Final week. Piccadilly, Denman Street, W1 (071-867 1116). Mon-Sat, 7.30pm, mat Thurs, Sat, 2.30pm.

REGIONAL

BIRMINGHAM: Helen Boxall plays beautiful, tragic Lady Isabel Vane, whose misfortunes in East Lynne would melt a heart of stone. Birmingham Rep Studio, Centenary Square (021-236 4455). Preview Wed, 7.45pm. Opens Thurs, 7.45pm. Then Mon-Sat, 7.45pm. Mats Sat, 3.15pm.

BRISTOL: Dickens's second Christmas book, *The Chimes*, also shows visions of the future. Peter Copley plays the poverty-stricken hero. New Vic, King Street (0272 250250). Preview Wed, 7.30pm. Opens Thurs, 7.30pm. Then Mon-Wed, 7.30pm. Thurs-Sat, 8pm. Mats on various days, 2.30pm.

HULL: New John Godbar play takes the lid off the lechery at the Office Party. Spring Street Theatre, Spring Street (0482 224800). Mon-Sat, 7.45pm. Mats on Dec 30, Jan 2 and 9 at 8pm.

LEICESTER: Julie Bardsley directs a cast of four adults and three children in *Frankenstein*, the Gothic tale that spawned a thousand movies. Haymarket Studio, Belgrave Gate (0533 539797). Previews tonight, Mon, 8pm. Opens Tues, 7.30pm. Then Mon-Sat, 8pm. Mats Wed and Sat, various times.

MANCHESTER: The Moorestone, the first-ever detective story, with plenty of suspects, including Indian jugglers (circus tricks provided) and Helen Atkinson Wood as the owner of the missing jewel. Royal Exchange, St Ann's Square (061-833 9833). Preview Wed, 7.30pm. Opens Thurs, 7.30pm. Then Mon-Thurs, 7.30pm, Fri and Sat, 8pm. Mats Wed, 2.30pm and Sat, 4pm.

MUSIC

CLASSICAL

TENDER IS THE NORTH: For the closing concert of the epic Nordic festival and of the LSO's Sibelius cycle, Sir Colin Davis conducts the composer's second and fourth symphonies. After the concert, the audience can celebrate the Feast of Santa Lucia with a glass of Swedish Glögg, to an accompaniment of Santa Lucia carols. Barbican, Silk Street, London EC2 (071-638 8891), tomorrow, 7.30pm.

LONDON SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA: Sir Georg Solti conducts Bruckner's 8th. Symphony No 8, in a concert which marks both the centenary of the work's first performance and the year of the conductor's 80th birthday. Barbican, Silk Street, London EC2 (071-638 8891), Fri, 7.30pm.

EOS: This confident young orchestra, which has already attracted quite a following, makes its South Bank debut with a programme of Mozart, Corelli and Tippett, as well as a score by Gary Adams for a new silent film by Derrick Sandini. Charles Hazlewood is the conductor, Francis Stephenson the lighting designer (who makes a significant contribution to EOS proceedings). Queen Elizabeth Hall, South Bank, London SE1 (071-928 8800), Thurs, 7.45pm.

OPERA

THE ADVENTURES OF MR BROUCE: Janáček's comic opera is given a new staging by English National Opera, produced and with a new translation by David Pountney — his final new production as the company's director of productions. Sir Charles Mackerras, who conducted the English stage premiere in 1978, conducts. Graham Clark plays the adventurous Mr Brouček, Visian Tierney is Malinka and Bonaventura Bottone is Mazal. Coliseum, St Martin's Lane, London WC2 (071-836 3161), Wed, 7.30pm.

ALCINA: Handel's opera — forever associated with Joan Sutherland and last seen at



Sweethearts: Ally Fitzpatrick, Andrew George and top, Ella Murfin, *The Nutcracker*

Covent Garden in 1962 — is given a new staging by the American director Stephen Wadsworth. Yvonne Kenny sings the title role; Ann Murray, Kathleen Kuhlmann, Anthony Rolfs Johnson, Judith Howard and Stafford Dean complete an impressive cast. John Fether, who as music director transformed the fortunes of Venice's La Fenice, makes his Covent Garden debut in the pit. Royal Opera House, Covent Garden, London WC2 (071-240 1066/1911), Fri, 7pm.

THE MAGIC FLUTE: Nicholas McGegan conducts a young cast in this new Scottish Opera production, which uses an English translation by Jeremy Sams. Martin Duncan is the director. Theatre Royal, Hope Street, Glasgow (041-332 9000), Thurs, 7.15pm.

ORFEO: Philip Pickett's radical approach to Monteverdi is not to all tastes, but the results are usually provocative in the best sense. Here he and the New London Consort turn their attention to the opera. I Ching, Solists include John Mark Ainsley, Catherine Best and Christopher Robson. There is a chorus of 15 voices, and instrumentalists playing a colourful range of period instruments. Queen Elizabeth Hall, South Bank, London SE1 (071-928 8800), Fri, 7.45pm.

ROCK

MADNESS: The reunited Nitty Boys are joined by whoresome Liverpool band, The Farm, and techno kings 808 State, who have

recently provided an expert cover version of UB40's *One in Ten*. Wembley Arena, Wembley, (081-900 1234), Tues, Wed, 7pm. Conference Centre, Brighton (0273 202881), Thurs, 6.30pm. Ice Rink, Cardiff (0222 224488), Fri, 6.30pm.

THE B-52s: The freaky funksters invite you to dance till you drop. Support comes from Irish observers of the everyday, the Frank and Walters. A new date at the Hammersmith Odeon has been set for next Sunday. Apollo, Manchester (061-236 9622), Mon, 6.30pm. Barnsley, Leeds (01924 452 4601), Tues, 7.30pm. Aston Villa Leisure Centre, Birmingham (021-328 8330), Thurs, 6.45pm. Brighton Academy, London SW9 (071-326 1022), Fri and next Sat, 7pm.

KETH RICHARDS: The mainstay of the Rolling Stones goes out on his own to promote *Mean*. Offender, his back-to-basics new album. Towns and Country Club, London NW5 (071-284 0305), Thurs and Fri, 7pm.

REVERLEY GRAVENS: Since winning the Best British Newcomer Award at the Brits this February, the singer-songwriter has ridden high in the charts with sophisticated, if predictable, love songs. Royal Albert Hall, London WC2 (071-494 5050), Mon-next Sun, 7.15pm.

JAZZ

BOE WILDER'S CHRISTMAS PARTIES: The eclectic New York saxophonist gets in the festive mood with Scotsman and fellow

Sidney Bechet pupil, Tommy White (Wed), Dave Cliff (Thurs), and band leader Humphrey Lyttelton (Fri). More guests are being lined up for next weekend. Plaza Express, London W1 (071-437 5595), Wed-next Sun, 7.45pm.

GEORGE MELLY: The good-time guy makes his annual appearance in potent partnership with John Chilton's Feetwarmers. Ronnie Scott's Club, London W1 (071-439 0747), Mon-Jan 2 (excluding Dec 25, 26 and 27), 8.30pm.

DANCE

THE NUTCRACKER: To mark the centenary of Tchaikovsky's enduring classic, Opera North is presenting a new version of the ballet by the popular contemporary dance choreographer Matthew Bourne and featuring the dancers of his *Adventures in Motion* Pictures company. Presented as part of a double-bill with the opera *Yolande*, the *Nutcracker's* original partner at the St Petersburg premiere on December 18, 1892. This special Christmas season in Leeds will be followed by a national tour. Grand Theatre, 46 New Bridgegate, Leeds (0532 455351/440971), Fri, 7pm.

THE DREAMTALES OF BEATRIX POTTER: Two works by Sir Frederick Ashton make up this Royal Ballet double bill. *The Dream* is a delightful and poetic distillation of Shakespeare's *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. *Beatrice Potter* was a popular 1971 film, here being given its first live performances in a new stage adaptation. Royal Opera House, Covent Garden, London WC2 (071-240 1066), today, 2.30pm and 7.30pm; Wed, 7.30pm.

LONDON CITY BALLET: The American ballet of Barbara Allen, combining romance, tragedy and superstition, is the inspiration for Jack Carter's ballet *The Witchboy*, the highlight of the company's mixed bill in the second week of its annual Sadler's Wells season. Also featured are Ashton's *Les Petits Chevaliers* — fun on skates in Victorian England — and Balanchine's *Donizetti Variations*, with a score taken from the opera *Don Sebastien*. On Thursday, the popular *Romeo and Juliet* returns for three more performances. Sadler's Wells, Rosebery Avenue, London EC1 (071-278 8316), The Witchboy bill: Mon-Wed, 7.30pm; *Romeo and Juliet*: Thurs-next Sat, 7.30pm, mat next Sat, 2.30pm.

NEEDLANDS DANCE THEATRE: Tonight is the last chance to see one of the world's finest contemporary dance companies, run by the Czech-born Jiri Kylian and shaped by his powerful and eloquent choreography. This is the troupe's first visit to Britain in 17 years and will be well worth the trip to Bradford for serious dance fans. Alhambra Theatre, Marley Street, Bradford (0274-752000), tonight, 7.30pm.

BOOKINGS

OTTON: A new production of Handel's opera, produced by Patrick Garland. The opera was popular in his lifetime, but has rarely been heard since. It is the story of the emotional and political travails of Otto, the 10th-century King of Germany. Robert King conducts The King's Consort on period instruments and James Bowman is Ottone. Queen Elizabeth Hall, South Bank, London SE1 (071-928 8800), Jan 25.

FESTIVAL OF BRITTEN: Mstislav Rostropovich with the London Symphony Orchestra presents a celebration of the music of Benjamin Britten on the 80th anniversary of his birth. The festival includes orchestral concerts conducted by Rostropovich; two performances of *Peter Grimes* (Mar 14, 17); a performance of *War Requiem* (Mar 21) at the Albert Hall; chamber music concerts; Rostropovich playing two of the six works written by Britten for him and performances by the Borodin Quartet and the Nash Ensemble. An exhibition, "Views of Britten", plus films and study days complete the programme. Barbican, Silk Street, London EC2 (071-638 8891), Feb 25-Mar 21.

ELVIS COSTELLO AND THE BROOKLYN QUARTET: The singer-songwriter and string quartet will be performing *The Juliet Letters*, a song sequence for voice and string quartet composed by Costello. They begin a short world tour with concerts in Glasgow and London. Royal Concert Hall, Buchanan Street, Glasgow (041-227 5511), Feb 22. Theatre Royal, Drury Lane, London WC2 (071-494 5000), Feb 26.

BLACK LIGHT THEATRE OF PRAGUE: The company under artistic director Jiri Smec returns to Sadler's Wells after an absence of 19 years with an adaptation of Lewis Carroll's *Alice*. Ultraviolet light is used to give white or light coloured fabric an unearthly glow and mime, dance, music and illusion tell the story. The familiar characters of Alice, the White Rabbit, Dormouse, Caterpillar and Cheshire Cat, not looking quite so familiar, fly about the stage defying the laws of gravity. Sadler's Wells, Rosebery Avenue, London EC1 (071-278 8916), Jan 12-30.

EXHIBITIONS

SOUTH BANK PICTURE SHOW: The last open painting competition of the year, the annual show at the Festival Hall, now in its 40th edition, has never been faulted for lack of variety — especially since all limitation on subject matter was abandoned. It sometimes seems too self-conscious about reflecting London's ethnic varieties; the main prize winners this year, John Dowe Matthews and Bernadette Karr, both hone powerfully on the edges of abstraction, and the rest range from photo-realism to abstract expressionism. Foyer Galleries, Festival Hall, South Bank, SE1 (071-928 3002). Daily 10am-10.30pm, opens Tues. Until Feb 7.

HOWARD CARTER: BEFORE TUTANKHAMUN: As well as being one of the most famous and successful Egyptologists, Howard Carter was also a skilled draughtsman, watercolourist, photographer and businessman. This exhibition includes his letters, diaries, photographs and paintings together with a fine selection of the wealth of Egyptian antiquities which he discovered or which passed through his hands. British Museum, Great Russell Street, WC1 (071-636 1555), Mon-Sat, 10am-5pm, Sun, 2.30-6pm, Until May 31.

PATRICK CAULFIELD: It is now 11 years since Caulfield had a retrospective in London. This new show brings us up to date with his painting now than he has dispensed with black outlines and ventured into trompe l'oeil realism. Serpentine Gallery, Kensington Gardens, London W2 (071-432 6075), Daily 10am-6pm, Until Jan 17.

EDWARD MUNCH: This important show is devoted to the paintings, drawings and prints made by Munch in the 1890s in connection with his great autobiographical scheme *The Plague of Life*, which was to deal with the universal themes of Love and Death and the angst which links the two. Some 85 pieces are drawn from three great Norwegian collections, mostly never seen before in Britain. National Gallery, Trafalgar Square, WC2 (071-638 3321), Daily, 10am-6pm (Wed to 8pm), Until Feb 7.

WISDOM AND COMPASSION — THE SACRED ART OF TIBET: Last chance to see this huge show of Tibetan art dating from the ninth century to the present day and financially supported by *The Times*. The exhibition offers an accessible introduction to the Buddhist ideas behind Tibet's

complex culture, providing a chance to discover an artistic heritage which has suffered greatly in the violence of recent years. Royal Academy of Arts, Piccadilly, W1 (071-439 7438). Daily, 10am-6pm. Until Mon.

BOUDIN AT TROUVILLE: As well as playing a vital role in encouraging the teenage Monet to forsake caricature for painting, Boudin was an important precursor of the Impressionists, and a distinguished figure in his own right. This is the first extensive showing in Britain for many years. Burrell Collection, Pollok Country Park, Glasgow (041-649 7151), Mon-Sat 10am-5pm, Sun 2-5pm. Until Feb 28.

STANLEY SPENCER: A SORT OF HEAVEN: Topical at the moment, with the publication of Keith Bell's authoritative catalogue raisonné of Spencer, this assemblage of Spencer brings together all sorts and conditions, with the emphasis on the eccentrically religious (until Jan 7). Also "Myth-Making", a rather arbitrary gathering of Abstract Expressionist American painting by Rothko, Pollock and Barnett Newman (until Jan 10), and "Natural Order", some of the Tate's recent sculptural acquisitions, including works by Marko Marz and Rebecca Horn as well as the homegrown Tony Cragg and Anthony Gormley (until Jan 24). Tate Gallery, Albert Dock, Liverpool (051-709 3223), Tues-Sun, 10am-6pm.

TOM PHILLIPS: As well as being a painter, the Royal Academician is a poet, musician, printmaker and book artist. These talents are shown off, along with his pet obsessions, in a selection of major works created since 1970. Royal Academy of Arts (as above), Daily, 10am-6pm, until Dec 20.

THE PAINTED MUSE: Up until the time of Ety in the early 19th century the nude in Britain generally required an excuse, however transparent, in the shape of a subject from classical myth or a Biblical story such as Susannah and the Elders. The nude in painting gradually became accepted in its own right, until today it can be the major preoccupation of a painter such as Lucian Freud without raised eyebrows. This display at the Tate charts the history of this change from the gallery's own collection. Tate Gallery, Millbank, London SW1 (071-621 1313), Mon-Sat, 10am-5.30pm, Sun, 2-5.30pm, until Dec 27.

VIDEO

LES DIABOLIQUES (Alzhan Archive, U): Clouzot's classic thriller about a wife and mistress plotting a sadistic husband's murder. Much imitated, but it still packs a punch, thanks to razor-sharp direction, steady atmosphere, and a chilling Simone Signoret performance. 1954.

GOOD MORNING, BARTON (Artificial Eye, 15): Two Tuscan stone-masons find Hollywood work building Babylon for interference. A marvellous idea, though *Artificial Eye*'s film finally wanders into trivial episodes. Vincent Spano, Joaquim de Almeida, Charles Dano as D.W. Griffith. 1987.



Lothaire Bluteau: carried away as *Jesus of Montreal*

JESUS OF MONTREAL (Artificial Eye, 18): An updated Passion Play causes controversy in Montreal. Well-managed satire of modern life and the media from French-Canadian Denis Arcand. Lothaire Bluteau casts a spell as the director who starts taking Christ's role too seriously. 1990.

STAR TREK VI: THE UNDISCOVERED COUNTRY (CIC, PG): So farewell, then, Kirk and Spock, in what is supposedly their last adventure. Good fun overall. With a rampaging turn by Christopher Plummer. 1991.

Film: Geoff Brown; Theatre: Jeremy Kingston; Classical Music and Opera: Ian Brunskill; Rock and Jazz: Stephanie Osborne; Dance: Debra Crane; Exhibitions: John Russell; Bookings: Geoff Brown; Bookings: Heather Alston

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EVENINGS OUT

LADY ELIZABETH ANSON PARTY ORGANISER



Unfortunately with my business, Party Planners, I have little chance of getting to the theatre but I would very much like to see the show *Which Witch* before it closes. I have connections with Scandinavia and I always think it is rather interesting to see something that has been slammed. I would also like to see the revival of *Audie Get Your Gun*. I seem to remember taking my mother to see it when I was about six. I love musicals, as I rather like to switch off at the end of a working day. As I am going to be up north in the new year, I don't think I can resist going to Hanley to see Dack Bishop from *Neighbours* (actress Anne Charleston) in *Madge Whittington* (Theatre Royal, Haymarket, Strickland-Trent, Thurs-Jan 16). I'm a *Neighbours* fan and I would be interested to see how "Madge" performs in a different role... 9

Answers from page 18

A lost legacy of faraway dreams and farmyard fluids

News reached me this week that old Mr Palmer had died. He was 90, or perhaps 100. Nobody seems very certain. His face gave no clues, for it had reached the age where time could have no further effect upon it. But it was his sharp and watery eye that sticks in my memory, and the way he fixed me with it when I was taken to his farm a couple of years ago to buy the horse-drawn binder that had stood idle in his barn for 40 years. "What d'yer wan' a binder for?" he quizzed me. Nervously I blurted: "To cut my corn with horses." "You seem t' be goin' backwards to me," he replied, and I tried to explain to him that I believed that by going backwards we may well find a new way forwards. He fixed me long and hard with that eye, and I suspect he thought I was going senile.

But now he is dead, no longer to suffer the misery of living on a farm he had long since stopped enjoying.

FARMER'S DIARY: PAUL HEINEY

His talk was only of faraway places and fondly remembered visits to Clacton as a young man. I tried to tease from him farming memories, but we always came back to Clacton.



The news of his death came from an auctioneer who had been asked, presumably by a solicitor, to dispose of what assets Mr Palmer had. To the best of anyone's knowledge, he has no family. "It's terrible," said the roan on the phone, "things are going very fast. Get over there quick." His concern was for the horse-drawn wagons which he thought might be of use to us. I was there first thing the next morning.

It was difficult to believe that anyone would rob an old man whose body is not yet cold, but it was clear that much had gone. Two

fine old Fordson tractors from the 1930s, tools from his workshop; even the house had been turned over.

Thankfully, the wagons were secure, since the barn in which they were standing is in a state of partial collapse and it will take a gang of builders to get them out. I wandered round the farmyard, deep in rainwater and several decades of unswept fallen leaves. Being careful not to bring any of the tottering buildings down on my head, I opened door after door and wandered through a labyrinth of out-houses, stables, byres, feed stores and harness-rooms. Strangely, there was not a lot of atmosphere. I guessed the heart had gone out of this farm many years ago. It had not been farmed for 20 years.



I was examining an old bale of hay, noticing that although it appeared normal on the outside it was of such an age that the inside had turned to powder, when I heard the smashing of glass.

Picking my way carefully over fallen rafters and tiles, I found my way through what was the stockyard and is now so overgrown as to be classified as woodland. Just by the old kitchen door was a blazing bonfire and a skip into which were being thrown old bottles and jars,

releasing noxious odours of engine oil, camphor, paraffin, cough-linctus and fly-killer. I asked what they had found. "Just this old rubbish," replied the lad and threw a dozen more jars into the skip. But I knew they were not rubbish. Mr Palmer was old but he had not lost his marbles, and at the time we were hauling the binder from the shed he still remembered the whereabouts of every spare part. His jars and bottles would not have been rubbish to him. On my own farm I too have jars, containing black, brown, golden and treacle liquids. Only I know which is harness-black to resine the collars where the horses have rubbed against their stalls, and which linned oil to massage the wooden handles of the plough when they become roughened. When lads as yet unborn turn up to clear out my place, will they know that the black filth in a bottle at the back of the barn is Stockholm tar,

which I smear on the driving belts of the thrashing machine to give them extra grip?

I wandered into the kitchen, and stepped back a century. Here, only two miles from a major trunk road, lived a man who cooked on a coal fire, heated his water in a copper and baked bread in an oven fired by wood. There was no electricity, and the cold water poured out of a lead spout into a stone sink. Paraffin lamps lit the room. "There was a lot of old paper-work upstairs," offered the lad. My pulse quickened. "Old bills, farming magazines, receipts going back to 1920. Quite a collection." I asked if I might look at them. "We've just put 'em on the bonfire," said the lad, proud of the effectiveness of his tidying. I could have cried. So might old Mr Palmer. Hidden among the boring old farming papers must have been treasures: his holiday postcards from Clacton. I hope he is there now.

Where the village gives voice

Newsletters play an important role in drawing rural communities together.

Joanna Gibbon catches up with a leader

Anyone wandering around the village of Chacombe in Northamptonshire on the fifteenth of any month is likely to see Dennis Mitchell, copy editor and newly appointed editor of *The Chacombe Chimes*, rushing hither and thither collecting contributions for next month's issue.

The Chimes, as it is known locally, is the village's independent newsletter, which, since October 1990, has informed, entertained and sometimes incensed the 220 households that receive it.

Three months ago, it won first prize in a national village newsletter competition organised by *The Countryman* and Action with Communities in Rural England (Acre), a national organisation representing all rural community councils in the country. According to Acre, village newsletters are increasing in number — its most recent survey, in 1990, shows that more than 2,000 are published every two months. *The Countryman* received more than 250 entries for its first competition.

The aim of *The Chimes*, says Roger Davis, the newsletter's founder, who has lived in the village for 12 years, is to represent the opinions of the villagers, and its compilation is very definitely a community effort. "The previous parish council information sheet had been full of 'thou shalt not'

and wasn't really working," he says. From the beginning he was determined that *The Chimes* would tackle serious issues. Many village newsletters shy away from grasping such nettles, mainly because small communities are tight-knit and prefer to deal with problems in an informal way, often on a face-to-face level, or — less helpfully — by pushing them underground, only to have them emerge as gossip and rumour later.

"The strongest article I wrote was about dogs fouling and chasing farm stock. We got four letters in response: one was excellent, but we weren't able to use it because it was anonymous," he says.

Nevertheless, Mr Davis says the newsletter could be a little more controversial. "It offers a place where grievances of any argument can be aired," he says, adding that both sides of any argument can be printed. In the past, the newsletter has urged villagers to report lorries thundering through Chacombe, using the village as a short-cut to a nearby motorway. As a result the problem was solved with the introduction of a weight restriction for heavy traffic.

At first, many people were reluctant to come forward and help. "They thought they couldn't do anything about it," says Mr Davis, who managed, with some difficulty, to gather together a nucleus of helpers. Nowadays there is a surfeit



Community spirit: Dennis Mitchell, the editor of *The Chacombe Chimes*, chats to Helen Pease on his rounds, delivering the latest issue of the village newsletter

of contributions for each issue. Often editorial and production meetings take place around Sue and Ron Wintersgill's kitchen table. Mrs Wintersgill, who organises advertising, fund-raising and production, is one of those people who makes the rest of us appear slothful. With a full-time job, two children and the duties of a parish councillor, a school governor, a member of the parish council and chairman of the horticultural society, she says she was press-ganged into helping.

"I can't honestly say I volunteered but we all have to rally round to keep it going," says Mrs Wintersgill, who was born in the village and returned with her husband five years ago. She finds the hardest job is raising money: the newsletter costs about £150 to produce and print and is delivered free of charge.

Sifting through coverage of the local life or a main article on our crime, the religious "Thought for the month", Women's Institute news, letters, comments and sports activities, the team does have time for a giggle. "There are horoscopes which, well, are sort of made up. And I am not sure how genuine some of the letters are for the Dear Florence column," says Mrs Wintersgill, laughing.

"Florence", however, is not one to be trifled with: one anonymous reader who has fallen in love with a gypsy asks whether he or she should give up his or her 17th-century cottage to go and live in a van. The reply is: "Are you mad?" Mrs Wintersgill is sure of the

newsletter's value in making the community closer. Membership to various sporting groups has expanded as a result of coverage; and a special section — Mr Mitchell's idea — welcoming newcomers to the village has helped their integration.

Fiona Eadie of Acre, and a judge of the competition, feels that the increasing importance of the village newsletter is because traditional places for meeting and talking, such as shops, schools and pubs, are fast disappearing. "Some villages are lucky and have one or even all three facilities, but others have none. The local newspaper, which often covers half a county, might mention some local events, but it misses all the details, anecdotes and snippets of gossip that the newsletter provides," Mrs Eadie says.

Having inspired Greatworth, a nearby village, to produce its own *Glimpses of Greatworth*, those at *The Chimes* can feel proud. All of them say that the strength of the newsletter owes much to the serialised childhood memoirs of Betty Cameron, who has lived at Poplars Farm for much of her life. Mrs Cameron, who is 72 years old and knows more local history than most — her family has lived in the area for more than four centuries — writes with no hint of sugary nostalgia.

She went to the local primary school during the 1920s, and life for many villagers, including her parents, was a daily grind of lending off poverty and working hard, long hours.

Readers' replies

A question of stature

Readers' nominations for the empty Trafalgar Square plinth

WRITING about new sculpture in London in these pages a fortnight ago, I invited readers to say whose statue they would like to see on the empty plinth in the northwest corner of Trafalgar Square. Apart from Nelson up on his column, George IV is also there, in the northeast corner, and two heroes of British India, Sir Henry Havelock (with an odd little police box in his plinth) and Sir Charles James Napier, stand on the south side.

Two readers wanted to see statues that would complement the figure of Nelson. Ruby Stoneham, of Southampton, proposed "a voluptuous Lady Hamilton", and Jean Gale, of Stratford, London, suggested "not a who but a what — why not a sculpture of HMS Victory".

Remembering who gave the nation the new wing of the National Gallery just opposite the plinth, Diana King, of London W8, said "it must be Lord Sainsbury". Mary Bevan, of Merthyr Tydfil, wanted to commemorate a brave and compassionate man who died earlier this year, Group Cap-

tain Leonard Cheshire, VC. I asked a few writers whom they would choose. John Grigg, the biographer and historian, had two suggestions. One was a great but somewhat forgotten naval hero, Admiral Bertram Ramsay, who masterminded the naval side of the evacuation from Dunkirk in 1940, was the Allied Naval Commander on D-Day, and died in an air crash in 1945. Grigg was mindful of the fact that George Washington already stands outside the National Gallery and his other candidate was an American: General Marshall, not only for the part he played in the war, but also for all he did as Secretary of State after the war.

The novelist and critic Sir Victor Gollancz had no doubt he thought that Charles Dickens should be honoured by a statue in Trafalgar Square. In fact there is, according to Jo Darke's comprehensive book *The Monument Guide*, no statue of Dickens in London, so I particularly applaud this proposal.

Another novelist, Beryl Bainbridge, said she would



Fresh faces: who else should join Nelson in the square?

like to see a statue of the Antarctic explorer Captain Oates, who had frostbite and chose to die so that he would not be a burden to his companions. He said: "I am just going outside and may be some time", then disappeared into the blizzard.

The writer Shusha Guppy wanted something spiritually inspiring in the square and proposed that Canova's sculpture of The Three Graces — Faith, Hope and Charity — should be put there. That would save it from going out of Britain, if it is too funny for the site, she thought a larger bronze of it might be cast.

Alternatively, she would like to see a great Rodin there,

preferably *The Kiss* — "for the glory of God and the union of male and female".

The historian of the London gentlemen's clubs, Anthony Lejeune, told me that he thought the plinth should remain empty until someone worthy of the marvellous honour came along. In fact, it is rumoured around the Establishment that the plinth is being kept for a statue, after her death, of the Queen.

In that case, let us hope that the day will be long delayed when the plinth is occupied — and that public feeling will support that idea when the time comes.

DERWENT MAY

Living on the woodland edge

Feather report

Birds like the edge of a wood. There is food out in the fields, but cover is at hand if a kestrel is tempted to start hovering above (Derwent May writes). A classic December sight is chaffinches and greenfinches feeding along the margin of a field of winter wheat, and repeatedly flying back up into the woodland trees just behind them.

They may be feeding on hornbeam seeds which have floated to the ground in their spinners, like horned Chinese lanterns. Greenfinches are particularly fond of these, and will tear them off the trees where they are still clinging on. But the main food supply in the fields is the vast quantity of weed seeds just lying there. There are not only seeds from this summer's plants, such as burdock and persicaria, but also ancient seeds of charlock and chickweed that have lain for years under the soil and were turned up by the plough.

These flocking chaffinches mainly come from Germany and Scandinavia, and are slightly larger than British chaffinches, which stay around their nesting territories in winter and live alone. When they want to move on, the chaffinches fly off in ones and twos with a soft, plucking noise.

Fifty years ago the chaffinch was considered to be the commonest bird in Britain, but now pride of place is thought to be held by the wren. One cannot walk far



Jacques
Great spotted woodpecker: uses claws to get at insects

along the woodland edge without hearing one of those. Though they are so small — about 3½ in long, including the turned-up tail — wrens are among the noisiest of the British birds.

Loud ticking and churring sounds coming from the undergrowth reveal that one is there, then a tiny brown shape whirrs over the brambles. Usually it will not go far, and it may pause on top of a spray, bobbing nervously up and down, so that one can see its delicately barred, cocked tail, its brown back sprinkled with what seem like tiny dewdrops, and its white eyspots. Wrens can also be heard singing quite often on fine winter days. It is a loud song that seems to

explode out of the bird, all passionate runs and trills.

There are larger birds about. An emphatic "chack" from the treestops draws attention to a black and white bird on the very tip of a bare bough. It has a sharp beak and red splashes on its head and under its tail, and is looking keenly all round it. It is a male great spotted woodpecker, surveying the area. When it is hungry it will look for insects behind the bark of a dead tree, hanging on with its powerful claws and chipping the bark away.

From deeper in the trees there comes a plummy, laughing call. It is another woodpecker — a green woodpecker. But these do not feed in the wood. They are birds of the woodland edge par excellence, since their food is almost

exclusively ants. You are most likely to see one in a stretch of rough pasture, flying up from an anthill like an undulating blob of golden light. It settles on a tree trunk as soon as it gets back to the wood, but immediately moves round to the far side, and if you try to get another view, it spirals up the trunk to get away from you. But even a glimpse is enough to see its green and yellow body and its bright red crown and moustache.

Two gamebirds sometimes meet here. Pheasants are birds of the wood that frequently stalk along just outside it, head forward, long tail drooping slightly. They run back rapidly into the undergrowth when a human appears. Partridges, on the other hand, are birds of the open fields, but they will often gather at the verge of the wood when seeds are abundant there. They go up with a few energetic flaps, then glide back into the field with wings held low in an arc.

Blackbirds and mistle thrushes, robins and magpies and wood pigeons — all these too you will almost certainly encounter, trafficking between branch and earth, before your walk is over. For you have been following a very important rural boundary.

What's about: Birds — look out for blackbirds and chaffinches which overwinter in small numbers. Twitters — white-throated sparrow, Market Raven, Lincolnshire: black-winged stilt, Braintree, north Devon. Details from Birdline, 0898 700222.

Wonderful and wicked

Frozen fancy desserts offer sophistication and sinful pleasure, but at a price

In this age of convenience foods, the ability to pass off a packaged product as one's own creation or, at the very least, as an expensive buy from a specialist food shop is important. No self-respecting host would wish to reveal the carefully buried carton lying at the bottom of the kitchen bin.

Food manufacturers have done a good job of wrapping up the high-class, ready-made meal market, but there remains a glaring omission: frozen classic desserts such as one would expect to find in a French pâtisserie. With Christmas approaching, however, there is a wide seasonal range.

A morning's survey of leading supermarkets' freezers revealed that ours is a country of cheesecake, Pavlova and, above all, Black Forest gâteau eaters. Judith Ward, marketing director at Sara Lee, says: "Key turn-ons are chocolate, fruit and cream — the basic currencies of the mass market."

Hopes were raised in Sainsbury's by the names of a *Prunier*, *Boisier* and *Cassier*. At £3.49 and £2.99 respectively, these products, both from Sara Lee's Continental range, came out last year after the company identified "an area at the top end of the market where demand was not meeting supply". MJS Ward says.

Among my colleagues, these desserts attracted the sort of praise normally associated with an unpretentious little wine: "honest", "not bad" and "very fruity" set the tone. A slightly artificial flavour was offset by simplicity, loads of fruit and a light texture.

Perhaps the greatest disappointment was in Marks & Spencer, which has traditionally been in the vanguard of the pre-packed food market and prides itself on being a step ahead of the competition. Certainly the sherry, Cointreau, luxury brandy and raspberry

gâteaux, priced between £6.99 and £7.99, stood out for high price and packaging, but inside was a product caught between *coulis* and custard. Reactions were unenthusiastic — "unremarkable" and "typical supermarket frozen cake". Even the lone "quite reasonable" was offset by a damning "foul". Although visually pleasing from the outside, inside the predominance of sponge stifled the zest of both taste and tasters.

At less than half the price of the M&S Cointreau concoction, Sainsbury's Amaretto gâteau (£3.75) proved excellent: apricots, Amaretto liqueur and biscuits all came through strongly, infusing every layer of the light brown sponge. Only the cream swirls on the top give this product a slightly church-fête air.

Presentation counts enormously in a market where impulse buying is important and overpackaging often the norm. The point has not been lost on Brossard, Europe's largest cake-maker, which has introduced a new range of "designer gâteaux" with the names "Le Prévert", "Charlotte Elysée", "Plaisir aux Noix" and "Carnaval". Both the Carnaval (£4.99) and Le Prévert (£6.49) were delicious. Le Prévert melts in the mouth, has a wonderful texture, plenty of light chocolate and pistachio mousse, and macaroon. For people sick of dieting, a trip to selected branches of Tesco and Sainsbury should bring satisfaction.

One successful way to transform the Black Forest gâteau is to translate it into *Selva Nera*, take away the cream swirls and cherries, add plenty of liquor and import the finished product from Italy. Made by Rachelli, and available only in Sainsbury's at £6.49, this dessert has all the right credentials: it looks and tastes good and has enough alcohol to obviate the need for a digestif. Slightly cheaper at £3.99, but not quite so interesting, is Rachelli's *Torta al Limone*. The texture has a bit of a doughy feel to it, although the flavour is very good.

It does not take a genius to spot that none of these products falls into the "healthy eating" category. Sugar, syrup, glucose and fats are the principal ingredients. However, as the "naughty but nice" cream commercials suggested, the consumer still needs to indulge. Indeed, sin as much as sophistication gives these products their bite. Manufacturers have realised that, in their search for adventure, people want to escape from the Black Forest, and are attracted by innovation and unusual names. It is a pity, then, that many of these off-the-shelf temptations will be removed after the festive season.

SEBASTIAN GOETZ

FOOD STY



Providing service on the hoof: Mike Gibson with some of his 400-strong herd of grass-fed Highland cattle, farmed near the Scottish town of Dallas for his own shop

It sounds like something dreamt up by the Scottish Tourist Board: a butcher called Macbeth's in Forres, selling Highland cattle raised in Dallas. But there is no meat in the window of the tiny shop at the end of the Grampian high street, no cosy red-cheeked butcher behind the counter.

Macbeth's is the model butcher of the future — a highly sophisticated retail outlet run by Mike Gibson, a former accountant, who supplies quality beef from his nearby Dallas farm to customers as demanding as Boucherie Lamarine and top London restaurant, Kensington Place.

Mr Gibson's description of the business is peppered with phrases such as "enhancing the product" and "customer base". There is no display because most of the meat (at least 70 per cent) goes out to the catering trade and half of the rest to mail-order customers. Locals can still come in and pick up a few chops or a pound of steak but it is cut to order by one of Mr Gibson's staff (or technicians, as he prefers to call them).

It was not what Mr Gibson had in mind when he bought the business five years ago. He saw it as an old-fashioned quality butcher. "We assumed that because we had a good product people would come and buy from us. We didn't realise the extent to which people shop where it's convenient."

"No beef in this part of the world is honestly bad. Even supermarket beef is streets ahead of what is available in the South East of England. People were coming to us for the top cuts and going to the supermarkets for their mince. We decided that the only way forward was to concentrate on a specialist service to people who would appreciate what we had to offer and be prepared to pay for it."

In practical terms that has meant a range of naturally reared (though not organic) meat, well hung and

carefully butchered. Most of the beef comes from Mr Gibson's own 400-strong herd of grass-fed Highland, shorthorn and Aberdeen Angus cattle and is "at least two years old before it is even considered for the slab". The lamb is also from Mr Gibson's own flock of 600 Scottish Blackface and Suffolk Cross sheep. Free-range pork comes from a neighbouring farmer and game from local estates.

Mr Gibson has worked out with great precision the right combination of breeds to secure year-round supply and provide meat of maximum flavour and tenderness. An Aberdeen Angus reaches maturity at about two years old, while Highland cattle may not be ready until they are nearing three. "It's a bit like talking about malt whiskies — everyone has a slight personal preference, some of which is based on fact and some on myth," Mr Gibson says.

What he is insistent about is that good beef comes only from beef breeds and not as a by-product of dairy herds — the problem, as he sees it, with much English beef.



The connoisseur's delight: the Highland

"With beef produced from a dairy cross, there's a tendency to push harder and rely on a higher proportion of grain in the feed. It makes for very lean, light coloured meat but meat that is absolutely devoid of taste."

The next step in the chain is "product enhancement", the careful treatment of animals before slaughter and correct hanging afterwards. Characteristically, Mr Gibson has undertaken tests to evaluate the optimum time to hang different types of meat. "We hang all our hindquarter beef for a minimum of 17 days on the bone even though there's a high com-

mercial cost in terms of evaporation and oxidised meat. "Game products are generally hung for seven to ten days, though you're always treading a fine line. Highly hung game is not to everyone's taste, though you need to hang it long enough to appreciate its unique flavour," he says.

The other element in the equation is the standard of butchery, which Mr Gibson has raised to the level required by his top restaurant and country house hotel clientele. "Some of our customers are extremely demanding, with quite specific requirements about the exact piece of meat that they want. If you insist on the eye muscle of a foreleg of beef cut out with an apple corer, it's startling what it can do to the price per pound," he says.

The same individualised service can be given to mail-order customers, but it comes expensive. And that is the nub of the problem with modern butchery as Mr Gibson sees it. "The problem is that the public is always pushing for cheap meat and the advertising and marketing men are trying to pre-

tend they're getting something they're not. In the meat industry the old adage of you get what you pay for is absolutely true."

The following recipe comes from one of Mr Gibson's regular customers, Lady Claire Macdonald of Macdonald.

Casserole of beef with prunes and pickled walnuts

serves 6

4-5 tbsp sunflower oil

2lb/910g stewing steak, weighed when trimmed and sliced into chunks about 1½ in size

2 rounded tsp plain flour, well seasoned with salt and plenty of freshly ground black pepper

2 medium to large onions, skinned and thinly sliced

1 clove of garlic, skinned and finely chopped

1½ pt/870ml water or 1 pt/580ml water and ½ pt/290ml red wine

6-8 prunes, stemmed in water till soft, then cooled and stoned (keep the cooking liquid)

1x15oz jar pickled walnuts drained of their liquid and chopped

Heat the oil in a casserole. Toss the pieces of meat in the seasoned flour and brown them, a small amount at a time, in the hot oil. When all the meat is browned, lower the heat and add the sliced onions to the casserole dish. Cook for about five minutes, stirring occasionally so that they cook evenly. Then add the chopped garlic and any remaining seasoned flour. Stir and cook for a minute or two then add the water, or water and wine, the prunes and their cooking liquid and the pickled walnuts. Stir until the sauce boils, replace the meat in the casserole, bring to simmering point again, cover with a lid and cook in a moderate oven (250F, Gas 4) for at least 1½ hours or until tender.

Mail order catalogues are available from Macbeth's, 20 High Street, Forres, Moray IV36 0DB (0309 672254 - 24 hours). Christmas orders, including those for gift packs and hampers, should be received by December 16.

Cuts above the rest of the herd

At Macbeth's the butcher, Fiona Beckett meets a former accountant beefing up the specialist and mail-order markets

One-stop wine shop

Seasonal value at the supermarket in Jane MacQuitty's guide to the aisles

THIS year's *Times* Christmas wine guide features the finest festive cheer, outlet by outlet. Your one-stop Christmas wine shopping starts here.

As always, I have concentrated on the best value and most widely available Christmas bottles. This is why you will not find obscure, limited-edition châteaux priced at £20-plus listed below. Equally, Scrooges will have to wait for my Boxing day party wine column to find out which of the festive £2.99ers are worth drinking.

SAINSBURY'S

Festive fizz: Sainsbury's Extra Dry Champagne, £9.99, halves £7.45, 20cl £4.49.

Sainsbury's Christmas present to its customers is to slash the price of this delicious, deep, rich, flowery champagne by £2 a bottle. This season's blend is the best yet, and the top cheap supermarket bubbly. Festive white: 1989 Meursault, Les Gervières, Ropiteau, £18.95. Classic white burgundy from a great year displaying all the elegant, nutty, buttery, multi-layered fruit chardonnay drinkers expect. Festive red: 1988 Château La Vieille Cure, Fronsac, £6.29, down from £6.99.

For value for money and rich, ripe, oaky, gamey fruit with wide appeal, this well made, attractively labelled Fronsac is hard to beat.



Bottled pleasure: raise your glasses to the best in-store value

Festive sticky: 1990 Clos Saint-Georges, Graves Supérieur, £6.95. Layers of luscious, deep, peachy-pineapple flavours make this a pudding wine to remember.

TESCO

Festive fizz: 1989 Moscatello d'Assi, Gallo d'Oro, £4.75. This underrated Italian sparkler goes down surprisingly well at Christmas with everything from Christmas cake and mince pies to fresh and crystallised fruit.

Festive white: 1991 Jackson Estate, Marlborough, Sauvignon Blanc, £6.95. This new cult Kiwi sauvignon delivers so much zesty, ripe, flowering-currant fruit that even your worst yuletide wine bore cannot fail to be impressed. Serve with fishy starters and even cold Christmas meats. Festive red: 1988 Château Les Graviers, St Emilion, £6.99 (down from £7.99). At its best with food, this rich, spicy-oaky claret reeks of sandalwood

and should be drunk with stilton and the festive bird. Festive sticky: 1978 Taylor's Quinta de Vargellas, £17.59. Brilliant, black as night, rich, plummy, violet-scented single quinta port. Serve alongside, but not in, stilton, and in front of the fire with roast chestnuts.

WAITROSE

Festive fizz: Waitrose Blanc de Noirs, Brut, £11.50. Made from Champagne's fuller-flavoured black grapes, this splendid, deep gold, non-vintage bubbly can manage smoked salmon canapés and hot sausages with ease.

Festive white: 1990 Château de Rochemorin, André Lurton, £7.85. Extraordinarily good white Graves from one of Bordeaux's best wine makers that can cope with turkey and even duck. Festive red: 1986 Château d'Agastac, £8.25. Hard to select just one red from Waitrose's top of the tree claret, burgundy and rhine range. Still, this velvety, warm, plum and castle-

charged claret will put everyone in a good mood with the festive bird. Festive sticky: 1885 Scholtz Solera Malaga, £7.25. This amazing sweet, raisiny, rose-scented Spanish fortified wine is one of the very few that can cope with the intense raisiny sweetness of plum pudding.

Full, flowery, waxy brioche flavours make this a Christmas champagne worth splashing out on.

Festive white: 1991 The Millton Vineyard Chardonnay, Gisborne, £6.99. Big, rich, beautiful buttery, cinnamon style puts this organic New Zealand chardonnay ahead of the rest. Good with the festive bird for those who dislike reds, and fish too.

Festive red: 1989 Ridge Zinfandel, Paso Robles, £8.49. Wonderful, deep, rich, ripe California fruit oozing with blackberries, mint and spice. Perfect with turkey and all the trimmings.

Festive sticky: Matusalem Muy Viejo Oloroso, Gonzalez Byass, £16.49. Amazingly complex, dark brown, luscious sherry with layers of raisins, nuts and spice. Great with Christmas pudding, mince pies and before midnight mass.

Festive white: 1991 Montana Chardonnay, £4.99. Not a desperately exciting Christmas choice but Montana's crisp, ripe apple chardonnay fruit from New Zealand's South Island is heaps better than the '91 vintage

and will go well with most festive first courses. Festive red: 1985 Château La Tour Figeac, St Emilion, £13.49. Magnificent, rich, soft, mature spicy-truffle fruit with superior claret style.

Festive sticky: 1990 Herzheimer Himmelreich Huelreber Beerenauslese, half bottle, £7.25. Sweet German wines have a role to play at Christmas, so try this splendid, spicy, grapefruit scented wine with fruit and nuts.

MARKS & SPENCER Festive fizz: Champagne C. Bauckart, £9.99. Soft, waxy, brown-bread scented fizz from the Union Co-operative is not the top high street bubbly, but it is the best available here.

Festive white: 1990 Chablis, La Chablisienne, £6.99. The Chablisienne Co-op supplies M&S with its best high street blend at this price and it shows. Wonderful, elegant, cheesy, herbaceous fruit will enhance any festive table.

Festive red: 1990 Château d'Audouville, Les Couversets, J. Quoit, £6.99. Just the wine to serve with spiced beef, game and other full-flavoured Christmas fare. Ripe, dusky syrah fruit heightens robust fruity Grenache warmth here.

Festive sticky: Moscatel de Valencia, £3.79. Light, fresh, sweet grapey Spanish pudding wine presents an easy drinking, uncomplicated Christmas sweet wine choice.

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and will go well with most festive first courses. Festive red: 1985 Château La Tour Figeac, St Emilion, £13.49. Magnificent, rich, soft, mature spicy-truffle fruit with superior claret style.

Festive sticky: 1990 Herzheimer Himmelreich Huelreber Beerenauslese, half bottle, £7.25. Sweet German wines have a role to play at Christmas, so try this splendid, spicy, grapefruit scented wine with fruit and nuts.

MARKS & SPENCER Festive fizz: Champagne C. Bauckart, £9.99. Soft, waxy, brown-bread scented fizz from the Union Co-operative is not the top high street bubbly, but it is the best available here.

Festive white: 1990 Chablis, La Chablisienne, £6.99. The Chablisienne Co-op supplies M&S with its best high street blend at this price and it shows. Wonderful, elegant, cheesy, herbaceous fruit will enhance any festive table.

Festive red: 1990 Château d'Audouville, Les Couversets, J. Quoit, £6.99. Just the wine to serve with spiced beef, game and other full-flavoured Christmas fare. Ripe, dusky syrah fruit heightens robust fruity Grenache warmth here.

Festive sticky: Moscatel de Valencia, £3.79. Light, fresh, sweet grapey Spanish pudding wine presents an easy drinking, uncomplicated Christmas sweet wine choice.



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Sweet and dainty treats

Frances Bissell, the Times cook, suggests sweetmeats that are child's play to make



THE last time I went to Paris, the most important item I packed was an apple corer. My task the next morning, starting at 6.30, was to core and bake 150 Cox's apples for a gala dinner that night, a celebration of British food cooked by the British for the French.

I was paired with Claire Clark, chef-pâtissier at the SAS Portman Hotel in London, to take responsibility for bread, pudding and sweetmeats. As this was to be a British meal, any notion of petits fours was banished. What we came up with was a very appealing selection of dainties, miniaturised versions of treacle tarts and shortbread, real fruit jellies and macaroons.

The jellies came about because Claire had bottled some damsons and had a couple of pounds left over. I drained them, rubbed them through a sieve, and boiled up the pulp with sugar. Because of the stones and relatively little flesh, damsons are the most difficult fruit to deal with in this way. I have suggested quinces and apples here, but quinces and pears would be a good combination.

Apart from boiling fruit pulp and moving trays in and out of the oven, which are definitely an adult's task, it struck me that several of the sweets are literally child's play to make, and might provide a couple of afternoons of pre-Christmas occupation. The sweets make good presents and seasonal decorations. The almond mixture, for example, can be coloured, cut into larger shapes, and baked longer in a low oven to harden. The shapes can be glazed or frosted for an extra finish, and a hole pierced for a ribbon to hang them on the tree.

It was a great treat to work in Claire's kitchen, with its calm, cool atmosphere. From now on, when I make sweetmeats, I shall not lag them on to a longer cooking session, but make them the focus.

That way, I shall have a better chance of a cool, dry kitchen, equipment and working. I can then work without hurrying, and discipline myself to weigh and measure accurately.

A good supply of rice or silicone paper, or heavy duty non-stick bakeware is important. Sugar and flour should be sifted. And it is vital that if you are using nuts, ground or otherwise, they should be absolutely fresh. If you need to grease trays or tins, a neutral oil like groundnut is best, or butter, or almond oil.

Brandy snaps
(makes 20 to 30)
2oz/60g unsalted butter
2oz/60g caster sugar or light muscovado sugar
2tbsp golden syrup
2oz/60g plain flour, sifted
good pinch ground ginger
1tbsp brandy
2tsp grated lemon rind

Grease the narrow handles of wooden spoons to shape the brandy snaps. Heat the butter, sugar and golden syrup in a small heavy saucepan until the butter has melted. Remove from the heat, and mix in the rest of the ingredients. Line a baking sheet with silicone paper, and drop very small spoonfuls of the mixture on the sheet, well spaced. Bake in a pre-heated oven at 180C/350F, gas mark 4, for eight to ten minutes until golden brown and lacy. Remove from the oven, and when firm enough, after a minute or two, lift off the paper, and shape while still warm and pliable round the greased wooden handle. When set, gently remove, and cool on wire racks. I like them quite plain like this, but you can pipe whipped cream into the brandy snaps.

Almond hearts
(makes 20-30)
4lb/110g ground almonds
4lb/110g icing sugar, sifted
free-range egg white

Mix the almonds and icing sugar, and add just enough egg white to bind together in a firm paste. Use two coffee spoons, dipped in water, to shape small oval quenelles. Place them on a baking sheet lined with rice paper, and bake in a pre-heated oven at 170C/325F, gas mark 3, for about 15 to 20 minutes, until just pale gold. Remove from the oven, top each with a piece of crystallised rose petal or glacé cherry, and cool on a wire rack. Small pieces of glacé cherries can be substituted for the rose petals.

Pesticoat tarts
(makes 40-48)
4lb/110g unsalted butter
3oz/85g icing sugar, sifted
5oz/140g plain flour, sifted
1oz/30g ground rice
iced water
caster sugar

Cream the butter and sugar, stir in the flour and ground rice, and add just enough water to make a stiff paste. Roll out to somewhat less than 1/4in/0.5cm thick. Cut into 3in/7.5cm circles, and from the

centre of each, cut a 1/4in/1cm round. Mark each circle into six to eight wedges with a knife cut, and prick a design with fork or skewer. Bake for 20 to 30 minutes at 170C/325F, gas mark 3. Five minutes before removing from the oven, dust with caster sugar. Cool on a wire rack.

Quince and apple jellies
These are time-consuming to make, but well worth it and make lovely Christmas presents. Quince or apple alone can be used, depending on availability, but just as the two fruits combine well in pies, so they do in these jellies. Slicing the pulp is the hardest part of the recipe.
2lb/900g cooked, well drained and sieved fruit pulp
2lb/900g granulated sugar

Put pulp and sugar in a large saucepan, and heat gently until the sugar has dissolved. Raise the heat, and boil the mixture steadily until it thickens, and you can draw the spoon through the mixture leaving a path. Stir frequently to stop the mixture from sticking. Cooking time will be 30 to 40 minutes at

least; it is important not to rush it by using too high a heat, which will burn the mixture. Oil a shallow tray, or make a silicone tray by stapling a sheet of silicone paper to form a shallow case. Pour in the jelly, and leave it until completely cold.

Cut into batons, lozenges or other shapes, and roll in caster sugar. Store in an airtight tin or box between layers of greaseproof paper. Tuck a few bay leaves between the layers for their scent.

Lemon cheesecakes
(makes 24 to 30 1 1/2in/4cm tartlets)
4lb/250g rich shortcrust pastry
4lb/110g ground almonds
3 free-range egg yolks
2oz/60g caster sugar
2oz/60g melted butter
grated zest and juice of 1 large lemon
4pt/140ml double cream

Line tart cases with the pastry. Mix the rest of the ingredients in the order given, making sure that everything is thoroughly blended before adding the cream. Spoon

into the pastry cases, and bake for 15 to 20 minutes in a preheated oven at 180C/350F, gas mark 4. Remove, and cool on wire racks.

Treacle tarts
(makes 20-30 1 1/2in/4cm tartlets)
4lb/230g sweet or plain shortcrust pastry
3oz/85g soft white breadcrumbs
6oz/170g golden syrup
grated zest of one lemon and half its juice
pinch of ground ginger

Roll the pastry thinly, and line miniature tartlet cases. Mix the remaining ingredients, spoon into the pastry cases, and bake in a preheated oven at 200C/400F, gas mark 6, for ten minutes, and then turn down to 180C/350F, gas mark 4, for ten minutes, or until the tarts are golden brown. Remove, and cool on wire racks. Lemon tarts can be made by blind baking the pastry cases for ten minutes, filling with lemon curd, and baking for a further ten minutes.

The oven glove of friendship

ENTERTAINING AT HOME

Tomasz Starzewski

My mother taught me to cook — I've been cooking since I was a kid. Ours is very much a Polish family. We speak Polish at home and we always eat European food. But I grew up in London — I'm a London boy.

We Polish Catholics take Christmas very seriously. There's so much tradition and so many dishes that are only cooked at this time. Inevitably, as a child, I got caught up in all that, with my mother being so busy the week beforehand, getting everything ready — you know, salting the herring, fermenting the beer for borscht, and making all the pastries. So, to me, cooking has always seemed a way of communication, a wonderful way of expressing friendship, of giving and sharing.

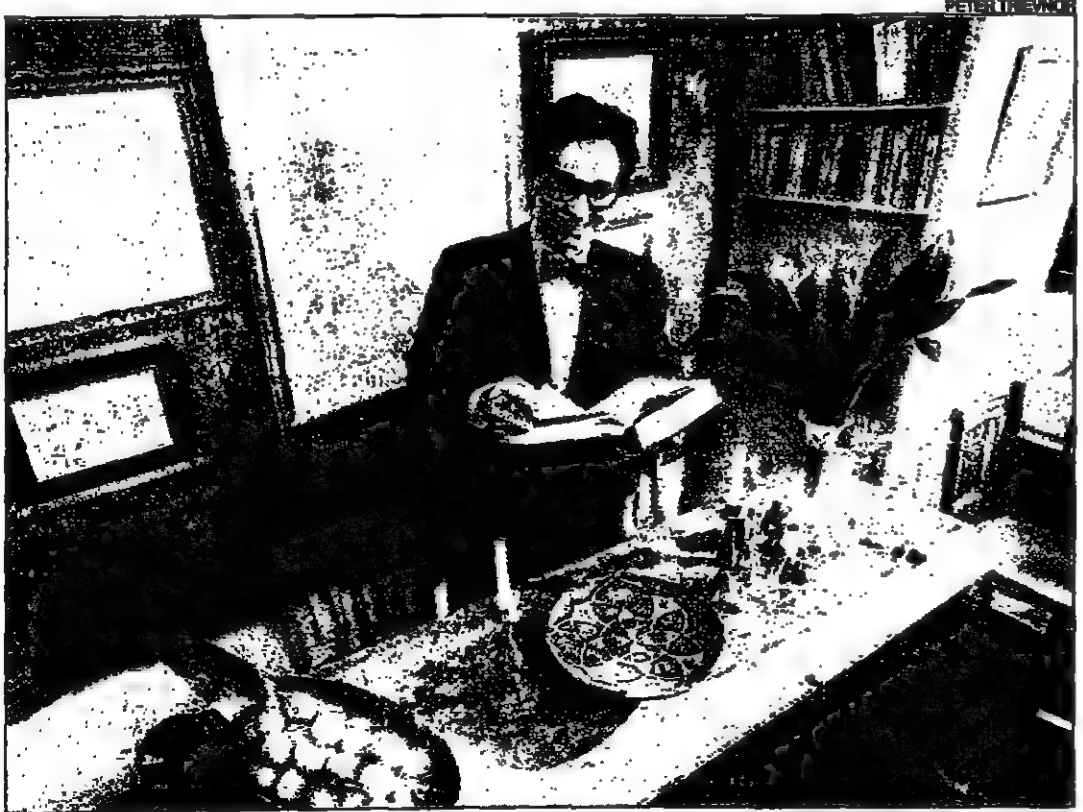
This year I'll be spending Christmas with friends in a cottage on Exmoor, and we'll be having both a Polish and an English Christmas. Polish people celebrate Christmas on Christmas eve: we fast during the day and eat fish in the evening. The reason for eating fish is that Christmas eve is one of the few days in the Catholic calendar on which we do not eat meat.

Before we sit down at six, we first break and share consecrated host (or bread) and wish each other a good year. Traditionally, this is followed by 15 courses, but I cut these down dramatically. I start off with herring, followed by borscht as a clear consommé, served with tiny dumplings with wild mushrooms. Then we have horog, a pasta dish rather like ravioli, filled with curd cheese, onions and potatoes, and served with sour cream. Carp is the main course and we finish with traditional cakes made by my mother.

Afterwards, if I were at home, I'd go to mass — no choice. As I'll be in the country this year, we'll sit round the fire, singing carols.

I find Christmas as a family thing very difficult. My parents have split up, which is why I go away. That, to me, is sad. For five years we haven't had a family Christmas. I always think it's hard for people whose parents don't live together.

For the rest of the year, my entertaining consists of dinner parties of never more than six people because my Soho flat is so



In proportion: Tomasz Starzewski prefers small dinner parties because his Soho home is so tiny

tiny. I entertain once a week, regularly, and like to have a hotch-potch — singers, bankers, lawyers, interior designers, illustrators, you name it. Some are people I've known a long time, while others are just people I happen to meet, like and invite round.

As for the food, it depends on the kind of evening. If I'm doing a card evening, it's very simple, very light, nothing messy. I cook a lot of Eastern European and Middle Eastern dishes and I'm a complete meat eater.

And there's always lots of vodka! I don't drink wine, so if people want good wines, they have to bring their own because the only thing I have is very good vodka.

Old favourites are caviar and blinis (Russian pancakes). I also love to make things like shepherd's pie and a stew. No one could call me a *noir* cuisine sort of cook, me a *noir* cuisine sort of cook, me a *noir* cuisine sort of cook.

Although we all gather in the kitchen, I never cook in front of my guests — it means I could not enjoy my evening. Besides, someone might try to interfere with what I'm doing and I could not bear that. So

everything is always prepared in advance, or it's marinated, or deboned or whatever. I'm not an untidy cook. I suppose that's because I've cooked for so long and usually in restricted spaces. If anybody does try to help me, they make a mess — and I cannot stand mess in my kitchen.

So when people arrive, they find all is done — tidied, finished, clean, ready for them. It's a good feeling. Then I turn down the lighting and turn up the music — always jazz because it's an essential part of my life, especially when I'm cooking. If I've had a bad day, I unwind by cooking. I find it incredibly calming because it requires a different kind of discipline.

If I hadn't become a designer, cooking would probably have been my alternative. In fact, once I was even tempted by the idea of becoming a professional cook. But do you know something? If ever you've been in someone's kitchen at six o'clock in the morning, it's hell. I've tried it. After a while I began to realise that, because I didn't know who I was cooking for, the whole point of cooking had gone. I wasn't enjoying it. For me the pleasure of cooking is doing it for people you know; it's just not possible to get the same buzz when it's for someone anonymous.

Spoon mince mixture into an ovenproof dish and cover with the mashed potato. Bake in pre-heated oven, 190C/375F, gas mark 5, until brown.

Tomasz Starzewski's shepherd's pie serves 8
1 large Spanish onion
4lb mushrooms
1 green pepper, deseeded and sliced
1 red pepper, deseeded and sliced
4lb carrots
2 tins chopped tomatoes; 2 bay leaves
2 cloves garlic, crushed; 2lb mince
Worcester sauce; 1tbsp mustard
2 beef stock cubes
5lb potatoes; dash of milk
4lb each grated Mozarella and Cheddar

Peel and finely chop onion. Chop mushrooms, peppers and carrots and sauté with onion for ten minutes or until soft — put to one side. Add garlic to the mince and fry mince in its own fat for about five minutes until brown. Add sautéed vegetables and chopped tomatoes, bay leaves, Worcester sauce and mustard. Crumble in beef stock cubes and simmer gently for about 30 minutes — put to one side. Peel and boil potatoes, then add milk and grated cheese. Mash all ingredients together.

Interview by Paddy Hart

Have your truffles dug to order

The supreme delicacy is available by post

ELAINE Headlam wrote to me last year from the Vaucluse in France, asking for guidance on drying tomatoes in the sun so that they could preserve her large harvest of vine-ripened tomatoes (Frances Bissell writes).

Now she has written to tell me about another, even more precious harvest. Her gardener, Yves, has collected truffles since he was a boy, both on the farm and on the local common land. At present all he collects goes to the Carpentras market every Friday morning, where the price last winter was about FF2,700 (£325) a kilo.

The truffle season runs from mid-November to the end of March. The best quality truffles, however, are available from just before Christmas to just after St Valentine's Day.

THE Headlams have set up a partnership to export black truffles to Britain by mail-order. These truffles are not preserved; they are actually found and unearthed to order. Would-be purchasers get in touch with them, particularly giving details about date of consumption, and then Yves and his dog Della go off to unearth the truffle. It is packed in rice in a Kilner jar, and sent to arrive as near as possible to the date of consumption.

The truffle must be eaten within 12 days of being unearthed. Full instructions for keeping and preparation are included, together with recipes, including one for a risotto made from the rice in which the truffle is packed.

A TRUFFLE in time for Christmas, giving a generous serving for four people, can be bought through Truffles de Lafoux for about £50. It will make a stunning Christmas present for a keen cook and will turn any meal at home into a celebration.

The real beauty of the truffle is that it is adaptable and goes with the simplest ingredients. It has a great affinity with starches such as risotto, pasta and potatoes. Creamy scrambled egg topped with thin slices of truffle is a fine dish too. Consider dressing Christmas turkey in half-mourning, for a classic French dish *en demi-deuil*, by slipping thin slices of truffle under the skin before basting and roasting the bird.

Truffles de Lafoux, 84480 Bonlieux, Vaucluse, France (010 33 90 75 93 64; fax 010 33 90 75 93 49).

Buy a truffle now, page 13

As Oddbins' beautiful new Fine Wine shop, beneath Holborn Viaduct in Farringdon Street, London EC4, you will discover not only traditional fine wines — top-growth clarets, classic Rhônes and Burgundies, but also less traditional varieties from both the Old and New World. Our range includes:

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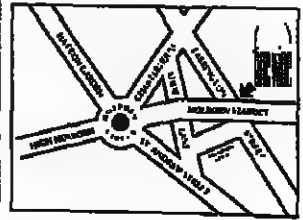
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INTERESTS



Home is where the worry is

Buying your first house is a formative experience, Annie Rankin reports



AN Englishman's home is his castle, or so they say. And taking refuge in bricks and mortar was never more popular than in the 1980s. For Thatcher's children, getting a foot on the property ladder was top priority, despite the snakes in the market. My own property hunt began in 1987, when estate agents were the fat-cats and first-time buyers their innocent mice. I remember traipsing from squalid mansion-block to stingy conversion, initially feeling belittled, and almost felled by the jargon. But soon my reprieve was peppered with the relative merits of leasehold and freehold, surveys, searches and stamp duty; worse, the pitfalls of conveyancing and gazing began to fill my dreams.

Next came the mortgage maze. Did I want an endowment policy or a sliding scale, "based on the premise," said my adviser, "that in ten or 15 years you'll be earning considerably more than you do now"? Rather less confident about this last assumption, I opted for a fixed-rate policy. I signed the forms, then panic set in: I'd never been on such a shopping spree. Would this be an enormous white elephant?

Thatcher's vision — that owning your home was not merely a token of respectability but almost a right — had affected my peers. So those who could scrape together the deposit were desperate not to be left behind. But, according to the Council of Mortgage Lenders, this was very British behaviour: "The UK has a higher proportion of young people in owner-occupation than any other European country."

Our approach to property, it seems, is far from universal. On the Continent there is more of a culture of renting, and there they seldom

see home-owning as integral to their security. No investment, they would say, is set in stone. (And "safe as houses" does now seem a derelict simile.) Nonetheless, in Britain our first property purchase is regarded as a milestone on the road to maturity.

In my case, as I collected the keys and opened the door, I was aware of crossing a second threshold. That realisation was daunting. As well as excited, I felt sick at having gravitated into the home-owning class. Each room appeared quite different without the vendor's kit. I didn't like the way it all smelt, and I had no emotional connection with the place. In short, I saw little reason to move in.

These feelings were not wholly unfamiliar. I remember the same nausea when I bought my first double bed. It was too much, it swamped the room: I didn't deserve it and felt self-conscious about owning something with a three-figure price tag. I spent several nights on cushions on the floor before I found the courage to sleep on it. Those emotions now paled in comparison to this new acquisition.

As one of four siblings, I felt at home in a bulging house, and positively rattled around my maisonette. That same double bed — by this time an ally, and my only piece of furniture — was dwarfed by the empty bedroom. So I scuttled away and spent the next few nights with pals on the pretext of being frightened to stay alone. Actually I was scared of something rather deeper.

Friends have reported also feeling horrified by the reality. In these days of latch-key kids, the notion of being given the key to the door at 21 is wildly dated. But when that little bit of Chubb in your grasp is your own, it can feel quite different. One friend found the commitment to a 25-year mortgage the worst: her life seemed to constrict ahead. "It was almost like signing



an aging warrant, and I began to visualise how I would look in my fifties when I had paid off the debt."

My new address may have felt like a huge burden, but as I set about feathering my nest I also knew I was tremendously lucky. One Monday morning I proudly announced that I had spent the weekend sanding and painting my banisters matt-black. One colleague took the wind out of my sails by asking why I was deliberately devaluing the flat. This unexpected line set me thinking. How much was the purchase an investment, and how much was it my home?

In the mid-1980s the money-making potential of housing was almost magical. British property speculators seemed blessed with the Midas touch. This was encouraged by our tax laws, which are heavily biased towards home-owners — unlike some continental countries, where those who buy and sell swiftly are penalised. But investment has not been everyone's

motive. My mother, for example, has always taken the view that a house is primarily for living in. If this was my home, I reasoned, I wanted to make it mine, to hang the pictures where I liked and not compromise one jot. As my grandfather put it, I was now free to spit into my own fireplace.

With this in my mind, I decided to paint my bedroom ceiling red. I thoroughly enjoyed the painting process: every slap of scarlet seemed to endorse my personality. That it was in supreme bad taste was of no consequence. I thrilled when it caused a hue and cry among visitors.

After a few months, though, its appeal began to fade. I had to accept that it was an oppressive colour and hardly conducive to sweet dreams. So I scaled the ladder once more to do the sensible thing and replace it with a nice shade of magnolia.

Some people found their first purchase more liberating than daunting. My cousin particularly relished the freedom it gave her. At last she could run around naked, sing at the top of her voice, make treacle toffee all day and never wash up — until she tired of the novelty.

As there was nobody to lay down rules, I, too, began to experiment — like a child testing its boundaries. I remember spilling a puddle of juice on the floorboards and deciding not to wipe it up. After three days of stepping round the sticky patch, I relented and went to buy a floorcloth. Formative incidents such as these taught me that I was responsible only to myself, and shaped my rite of passage.

I had made the giant leap from humble flat-sharer to property-owner, mortgage-holder and landlady. This last hat was especially uncomfortable; should I choose a friend as a paying guest or was this mixing business with pleasure? Would the money, overtly or subtly, come between us? It took several

weeks before I stopped apologising when asking my lodger for the rent.

Then there was the unwelcome image of having climbed aboard the mortgage bandwagon. In Britain, joining the property-owners' club can define you as a fully paid-up member of society — and some, indeed, congratulated me on it. I tiptoed around gingerly in my grown-up new role, as if breaking in a pair of shoes. For a start, those grim-looking envelopes could no longer lie unopened, nor be sent on to the landlord. I felt alone at the helm in a sea of paperwork.

Self-reliance was a key part of the process, as I learnt from the case of the cowboy plumber, the dangerous repair job and the £300 bill. Two of the parts supplied were for a different type of boiler, one part was never fixed at all. Oh, the anguish of being taken for an ignorant woman. So I entered the world of household maintenance — thermostats, cylinders, cisterns, even up to the loft to study the overflow system. I was a reluctant pupil on a steep

learning curve. But I knew it was the only way to avoid further humiliation.

Some people take buying their first home in their stride, but for others it is a monumental step. One friend bought a place and spent the next ten months staying at his mother's, unable to take the leap and actually make it his own. I have heard similar stories about other young males leaving the parental nest. Those who can afford it often delay their move by bringing in builders or decorators while they acclimatise to the new situation.

For me it was a time of profound change, which overall brought a great sense of achievement. This is not to say that the heebie-jeebies didn't resurface. My first year's mortgage statement — and the realisation that I owed more than I'd originally borrowed, despite hefty monthly dues — brought me up short. But I was, at last, an adult. I didn't need a wedding ring or baby to prove it — and I had pulled it off all by myself.

Times special offer: readers are invited to some seasonal cheer at Hackett in Sloane Street, with the chance to win a £500 wardrobe

From gent to gentleman (or love at first suit)

Barry Turner trades in his much-loved corduroy for a confidence-boosting bespoke outfit to find that clothes can indeed make the man

I was once told by a psychologist who specialises in punchy one-liners that self-confidence is a new suit. I had to ignore his advice at the time because I forgot to ask him how to make enough money to afford a new suit. Instead, I went out and bought a pair of socks. Waste of money, really.

A more favourable opportunity to test the theory came recently when a friend observed that my green check, of which I was inordinately proud, gave me the appearance of an out-of-work bookie. Self-confidence drained away.

"You know what you have to do," he said. I held out a hand for him to

press an address card into my palm. "Take it, old chap; you'll feel a lot better afterwards."

Which is how I came to be at the gentleman's emporium off Sloane Square. Hackett. I liked the name. It had a sound English ring to it. I could visualise the first Mr Hackett, in stovepipe hat and full black beard, opening a small shop circa 1760. The impression was confirmed by the regency style facade of the Sloane Street Hackett and the spacious interior, two floors of clothing displayed against white wood panelling with plenty of room to browse. Just like it was in the old days.

It came as a surprise, therefore, to

find that Hackett is a relative newcomer to retailing. Young Mr Jeremy Hackett is also the only Mr Hackett, at least on the tailoring scene. He set up with his partner, Ashley Lloyd-Jennings, barely ten years ago to sell second-hand clothing from a shop in Parsons Green. Their breakthrough was the purchase of the entire wardrobe of the late Jack Buchanan's late brother, a man who devoted his wealth to sartorial splendour.

After that, it was a succession of quick steps from recycling to making quality clothing. Dunhill, which prides itself on quality in all things, saw Hackett as a worthy addition to its investment portfolio. With six shops in London alone, Hackett opened the Sloane Street flagship store last month.

I learned all this by way of conversation with a friendly young assistant, who was in no hurry to find out what, if anything, I wanted to try on. The gentle approach was much to my liking. I am sick to death of shopping by numbers. Step forward, one, two, select purchase, one two sign here, one two: now, get out. How pleasant, for a change, to do business at a civilised pace.

Eventually, we did get round to

discussing my requirements. I had on my corduroy suit, a garment of uncertain vintage, which, I persuade myself, gives me a rakish appearance suitable to my intellectual pretensions. No less an observer than Sir Robin Day once said that it made me look artistic, a remark that confirmed my view of him as a man of remarkable

'Fashion is not a word we use at Hackett,' he whispered. 'We refer only to style'

perception. I confessed to the Hackett man that I had in mind something of the same. "A comfortable material, if you please. None of that spiky wool."

I was assured that spiky wool is not to be found at Hackett. Perhaps, the assistant suggested, I would like to meet Terence, who would be happy to advise.

This was it. My elevation to the

ranks of the great and the good. After two score years and 15 as an off-the-peg man, I was about to meet a bespoke tailor.

At 36, Terence is a veteran of Savile Row, a master cutter of such eminence that Mr Hackett confesses to head-hunting him for the critical job at Sloane Street. Already he has attracted an impressive list of clients who are happy to pay for Savile Row quality at a third of the price.

I could not help noticing that Terence was not wearing corduroy, favouring instead what he described as a "middle-weight pin head". It looked good to me.

I asked his opinion of corduroy. "Long-lasting," he said tactfully. "But it doesn't cut well and it loses shape almost as soon as you put it on. It lacks..." He paused long enough for me to prepare for the shock. "It lacks distinction."

I told him of my encounter with Sir Robin Day.

"Quite so," said Terence. "But have you ever seen Sir Robin in a corduroy suit?"

I had to admit to missing out on that experience.

The fire of ambition was now well and truly stoked. I wanted this elusive "distinction". Boldly, I

asked the secret. And for a shirt? "I suggest a regular collar," said Terence. "The cut-away does rather emphasise your neck."

I was left in no doubt that my neck was large. What the hell, I had already been described as full-bodied. I can think of worse things to be compared with than a bottle of plonk.

"Is this the latest fashion?" I asked.

For the first time in our brief acquaintance, Terence was fazed. "Fashion is not a word we use at Hackett," he whispered. "We refer only to style."

Hackett style is traditional, unchanging and immune to influ-

ences from Paris or Rome. It has a world-wide appeal (significantly, the Hackett empire embraces 13 outlets in Japan) and while it is undeniably formal, it is also a cry from the heart against all this crass, ephemeral, second-rate.

It was just four weeks later that I was summoned for my fitting. Terence was happy. I was happy. I stepped out of Hackett a new man. My psychologist friend was fully vindicated.

In my new outfit, there was nothing I could not achieve. Why, I might even take over from Sir Robin Day. I have the bow tie. All I need to do now is to put on a little more weight.

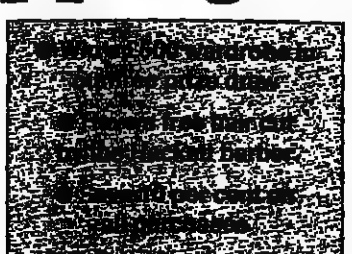


Before: long-lasting, artistic even, but lacking distinction

The Times/Hackett shopping event

The Times and Hackett invite you to an exclusive Christmas shopping event at Hackett's new flagship store in Sloane Street, London, on Tuesday December 15, 1992. Times readers will be invited to learn about the Hackett brand while enjoying a glass of festive punch and a mince pie, and stand the chance of winning a wardrobe to the value of £500 in the free prize draw.

Included among the special events taking place in the store, there will be a cobbler to explain the making of welted shoes; a shirtmaker to demonstrate the make of a Hackett shirt, with patterns of fabric and partly made shirts; a



specialist hatter with Hackett hats and linings; and a specialist suitmaker with hand working on a partly constructed suit.

The Hackett knitwear manufacturers will take readers through the technical detail that is part of their trade while William Fox-Pitt, the three-day eventer, will be in the equestrian

area talking about riding clothes and eventing in general.

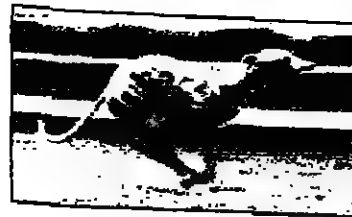
Hackett's bespoke department will also be on hand to offer advice on bespoke tailoring and complimentary hair cuts will be offered by Hackett's own barber. There will be a 10 per cent discount on purchases made during the evening and all readers will be given a free gift on leaving.

The Times/Hackett evening takes place on Tuesday December 15, between 6-9pm at Hackett, 137/138 Sloane Street, London SW1. To reserve your place ring THP on 071-704 9941 on Monday or Tuesday between 9am and 5.30pm, or bring this copy of The Times with you.



After: already the subject's self-respect is visibly growing

With the pack at the dog track



Armed with advice from friends and other experts, Helen Pickles samples Britain's second favourite spectator sport

Expecting looks of horror and disapproval, I whispered: "I'm going to the dogs." Instead, people pulled me to one side, mumbling into their collars: "Look, I've got this system. Can't fail. Works every time." Friends, colleagues, the sort of responsible citizens you would ask to witness your passport photograph, eagerly offered advice. "Always bet on the favourite to come second," instructed Colin, a retired GP. "Deduct four from the winning number and double your stake," advised Chris, a public relations manager. We are, it seems, a nation of closet dog-gamblers.

Greyhound racing is Britain's second largest spectator sport. We back our hunches to the tune of £2 million annually.

Confident in my new-found knowledge, I strode into the bar overlooking Newcastle's Brough Park stadium. There was a quiet hum of conversation. Men in camel coats and fake Barbours looked up briefly before returning to their racecards. Not to be outdone, I frowned over my racecard — a small booklet with a concise history of each dog's performance. The word to note here is *concede*.

For example, Active Gold's entry began "03.0c 255 3 6th 74 Tractor Bar (RHous) SawHimp". Laboriously, I worked out that on October 3, Active Gold ran a 255-metre race at Rye House from trap 3 coming in sixth, seven-and-a-quarter lengths behind the winner, Tractor Bar. "SawHimp" refused to be decoded. "It's obvious," the small Irishman next to me said. "He was slow in getting away and then hampered at the first bend. And this" — he stubbed his finger at "EvCh" — "means he had every chance, while that" ["BB1K3"] means he was badly balked at the third bend. Now, you'll have to excuse me, I've got business to attend to." Business, it transpired, as a runner to the mysterious man in glasses and cerise shirt languidly sipping wine on the far side of the room. At the bar, a man in an expensive suit was circling figures heavily on his card: £800, £375, £250. These were his winnings. I felt weak.

"You've got to be committed to back the dogs," explained Trevor Murray and his friend, who preferred to remain anonymous. Both were on the dole but were laying bets in triple figures.

Clearly the bar is home to the hardcore punters for whom greyhound racing is a living, not a night out. "You've got to have the memory," said Geoff Dixon, the smart suit at the bar. "That man in the corner has the performance of every dog in every race they've ever run, down to their finishing and starting speeds, on his lap-top computer." Mr Dixon, sixty-



Studying form: diners in the restaurant at Brough Park (above), in Newcastle, can watch the races from their tables, while the bookies (below) keep an eye on the odds



something and in the wholesale and nightclub business, has been coming to the dogs three times a week since he was 18. He bets about £5,000 a week.

"Of course, the average punter chooses a name he likes and is just as likely to win," remarked Mr Murray's friend.

On to the restaurant to watch the races in double-glazed comfort, stick a pin in my racecard and select a dog, while tucking into my steak and chips and house red. Keen to get away from the flat-capped, muffled image, the National Greyhound Club is hot on corporate entertainment, hen-nights and family groups.

Brough Park has been working hard at its new look, although "The Shady Begonia" seems a touch ambitious for a restaurant in one of Newcastle's more industrial suburbs. The tables are arranged in stepped rows, with pale blue and lemon cloths, proper china and silver-plated cutlery. The menu is of the Berni Inn variety circa 1970 — and tough if you are vegetarian — but at £9.50 for three courses

(battered onion rings 50p extra), good value.

Each place-setting has a sheet of tote betting forms, which waitresses collect, with your stake money, before the race. Overhead television monitors show the latest odds. The disadvantage is that, unless you are prepared to keep interrupting your meal to race down several flights of steps — or employ a runner to do it — you cannot lay a bet with the trackside bookies.

The advantage of betting with a bookie is that you are guaranteed the odds at the time you lay the bet, no matter how they alter afterwards. With the tote, all bets go into a pool and the odds are not decided until the race starts. Potential winnings are therefore greater with the bookies. With them, however, you can only bet to win. With the tote, you can play safer: for example, choose two greyhounds to come first or second in either order, known as a "reverse forecast".

A tiny fanfare of music over the loudspeakers announced the dogs

GREYHOUND racing takes place throughout the year, most tracks holding three or four evening meetings a week. A few have occasional afternoon meetings. There are two types of greyhound track: those run by the National Greyhound Racing Club (NGRC) and independent or "happening" tracks. There are about 45 of the latter, which are not subject to any tests or controls, and dogs and trainers do not have to be licensed. Entrance fees (on average £2) are generally cheaper than at NGRC tracks (averaging £3). To find your nearest track try libraries, tourist information or the weekly Greyhound Owner & Breeder.

Safe bets

□ The NGRC Ltd 24-28 Oval Road, London NW1 7DA (071-267 9250)

Runs 36 tracks throughout Britain. Selected tracks and important races:

□ Wembley Stadium Wembley, Middlesex HA9 0DW (081-902 8833)

Holds the St Leger (£15,000) in November.

□ Wembley Stadium Plough Lane, London, SW17 0BL (081-946 5361)

Holds the Greyhound Derby (£40,000) in June.

□ Hall Green Stadium York Road, Hall Green, Birmingham B28 8LQ (021-777 1181)

Holds the Grand National (£8,000) in April.

□ Belle Vue Park Stadium Kirkham, Lancashire LA1 1TA (061-223 1366)

Holds the Fosters Cesarewitch (£16,000) in September.

□ Reading Stadium Bennet Road, Smallmead, Reading RG2 0UL (0734 863 161)

Holds the Reading Masters (£25,000) in May.

□ Glasgow Shawfield Stadium Rutherglen, Glasgow G73 1SZ (041-647 4121)

Holds the Scottish Derby (£15,000) in May.

□ Bred na gCao (010 353 613 16788)

Responsible for tracks in the Irish Republic.

for the fifth race were about to be paraded. My money (£1) was on Sand Boy. The lights dimmed, a hush descended in the restaurant and I sent positive thoughts through the double-glazing to Sand Boy. Unfortunately, the waitress chose this moment to ask whether I was the medium rare rump with onion. Clearly this upset transmission and Sand Boy came in second. I gave the next race a miss. This was a pity, since Star Black, the name I had mentally

ringed, came in first. On the next table, three girls from the local evening paper on a sales department outing were also working on the name principle. Joanne Child, 22, had brought £40 for the evening, "the same as I'd take if I was going out with the town". Friends had been horrified when told where the girls were going. "But once you're here it's different," Ms Child explained. "It's dead social, really nice. I wouldn't mind coming again." On your own? "Oooh no. Not three girls together. It wouldn't be right. Not with all these old men."

Samantha Yeoman, 18, looking aghast, gestured down at the flat-capped, muffled crowds outside on the terraces. "We'd come with family."

It was 9.15, the eighth race of the night. Ms Child had a reverse forecast on numbers five and one. Once more there was the tiny fanfare, the lights dimming, the hush. "Go on two. Go on son!" a man to my left yelled, hammering the table with his spoon. "Go on five! Go on one!" yelled the girls. Gone were the polite self-conscious murmurs of encouragement from earlier in the evening. Alcohol and a few lucky wins had turned us into high-rolling gamblers. One and five streaked over the line. "You've won! You've won!" The girls shrieked and whooped and bounced in their chairs.

In the public bar, separated from the restaurant by two double-doors, the air was thick with smoke and muttered confidences. Men hunched in tight groups, shaking their heads. Others stared motionless at the flickering television monitors, before gliding off to place

their bets at the tote windows. Old men in caps and cardigans sat at Formica tables doing slow and complicated sums on their racecards. Nobody smiled. Down below, in the snack bar, it was even foggy and gloomier. The bookies watched the tote screens, their faces impassive, before slipping out to chalk up their boards.

At 10.25, five minutes before the last race, the terraces were deserted. Two minutes later, men began pouring out of the bars and swarming round the bookies. With half a minute to go, Mr Dixon appeared, slipped up to one and peeled off 20 £10 notes. The air was raw and gritty and tingling with suppressed hope. The hare shot out. The dogs yelped in their traps. Thirty seconds later it was all over.

Mr Dixon was £1,000 better off. Ms Child had made £16 and was well pleased. Mr Murray's friend had lost £100 and shrugged. I had lost a liver. The next day, out of curiosity, I mentally reran the evening using my friend Chris's illogical system and an initial £1 bet. I would have cleared £513.

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Just like mother played

Another wet Sunday? Or long winter evening? Time to introduce your children to a good old-fashioned parlour game. No, not just charades. There is a host of parlour games which require nothing but imagination and good, clean fun.

● **The dictionary game:** Each player, with the help of a dictionary, writes down a complicated word on a piece of paper. He or she takes it in turns to pass the word round all the other players, who then write down a definition. An adult collects the definitions and asks everybody in turn whether each answer is true or false — for example, is "jijitsu" really an exotic fruit or is it a Japanese wrestling art? Points are awarded accordingly. Excellent English practice without the victims realising it.

● **Famous people:** An adult starts by thinking of a famous person (for example, Beethoven) but does not reveal who it is. He or she then says: "My surname begins with B." Players then have to ask questions requiring a "yes" or "no" answer to ascertain who the famous person is — are you a musician? are you a man? are you still alive? Set a time limit (about ten minutes) or limit each player to ten questions only, depending on age and skill. This is both educational and fun.

● **The minister's cat:** The object is to describe the minister's cat with adjectives beginning with the letter



"a" and going on through the alphabet. The catch is to remember all the other adjectives which other players have given the cat, too. The first player might start by saying that the minister's cat is an angry cat; the next might declare the minister's cat is an angry black cat; and the third might say it is an angry, black, creepy cat, and so on. After everybody has had a go, the first person continues. Whoever forgets previous adjectives drops out of the game. The winner is the survivor.

● **Crambo:** One player selects a word but does not reveal it to the others. He then says a word which rhymes with it and the others have to guess what the original word is. Ten goes allowed each. For instance, if the original word is "chair", the leader could say "pair" and the others might come up with "hair", "scare", "dare", and so on, before hitting on the right one through trial and error.

● **Animal charades:** One person thinks of an animal and mimes it through actions only — if it is a cat, he or she might crawl around and pretend to lick itself. The others have to guess which animal is being portrayed. Good for tines. Not recommended after a heavy lunch.

● **Kim's game:** Place an assortment of objects (thumbtack, pencil, hairbrush, and so on) on a tray and allow children to look at it for a minute. Cover with a cloth and then ask them to write down all the objects they can remember.

JANE BIDDER

Fun without tears for the game parent

Fun and games sound as inseparable as holly and ivy. So here are some ideas to keep children (and adults) rollicking through the Christmas festivities, and even beyond.

● **The lion hunt:** An imagination game for small children, needing a leader (probably an adult) with some acting ability. Any number of children can join in. It is useful to have somebody to jot down the landmarks of the journey.

Those who want to be part of the lion-hunting party gather in the middle of the room. The leader conjures up the scene with words. "This is a clearing surrounded by trees. Listen to the macaws screeching." And so on.

Then pretend to get kitted out, miming everything in slow motion: pulling on strong boots; zipping up camouflage outfits; seeing that the nets you are taking do not have holes in them. Then, peering this way and that, plunge into the undergrowth to hunt the lion.

Invent seven or eight frightening obstacles as you go. A swollen river, perhaps, full of alligators, which can only be crossed on slippery boulders. Arms out to balance. Lurch from side to side. A branch of a tree which has to be edged across. Steer clear of the eerie-looking snakes that are dangling a few branches up.

After the trifle and jelly come the party games to keep the children happy and tax adult minds

Then, suddenly, you glimpse the lion's tail. Just the tip of it. Approach slowly. Nets at the ready. The lion turns on you with a terrifying roar. There is nothing for it but to retrace your steps quickly. It is now a memory game. The children have to remember each stage of the journey, and go back exactly the way they came in fast motion, prompted if absolutely necessary by the person with the notepad. When they get back they must lie low, keeping quite still while the lion returns to the jungle.

● **The mummy game:** This is played in pairs. For each pair you need an identically sized loo roll. The smaller partner winds the paper around the larger one as slowly as possible, transforming him or her into an Egyptian mummy lookalike. Leave spaces for eyes, nose and mouth. Do not rip the paper or the pair is out of the game. Non-participants act as un-

pires, making sure nobody stops wrapping. The last pair to finish wins. Then, for the second stage, "it's dead social, really nice." I wouldn't mind coming again." On your own? "Oooh no. Not three girls together. It wouldn't be right. Not with all these old men."

● **The key game:** Split into two teams. The idea is to attach a key to a piece of string and for each team member to thread it through his or her clothes, joining the team together. Try to arrange an equal balance in the overall length of the teams and the sort of clothes they are wearing. Skinny skirts are an advantage and trousers a handicap. To calculate what length the string should be, add together the height of each person in the team and allow for a good space between each player. The first in line starts threading the key down his or her neck, through trouser legs and so forth. The next one begins at the ankles, up via the waistband and out at the neckline. And so on. The first team to get the key to the end of the line wins.

● **Newspaper game:** Each player finds a partner. Put on the ground as many newspapers as there are couples. Play some music. The players dance until the music stops, then they balance with their partners on a newspaper. When the music starts again the newspapers are folded in half. The game



All wrapped up: the mummy game requires several rolls of loo paper, but you get them back at the end

continues along these lines, dancing, balancing and folding, until the newspaper is so small that balancing becomes a feat. If anybody cannot balance and touches the ground, the pair is out of the game.

● **One step, two step:** Put two numbered playing cards on the floor for each child. Turn on some music. Players dance until it stops. Then they jump on any card. If possible they step on two. Somebody with his back to the game

announces a number. Anybody with a foot on a card with that number gets a sweet (to put aside until later).

● **Guess the objects:** Ideally you need a cotton bag, tied up with a

tight ribbon. Inside should be several objects, some deliberately deceptive — a wrapped sugar cube, for example, that may be mistaken for a dice. Each child can take as long as he or she likes to feel the objects through the bag. The players either write down the answers or quietly tell an adult what they are.

● **Elements game:** Players form a circle. Somebody throws a rolled-up, knotted hanky into it and names an element, either water, air, fire or earth. Whoever the hanky lands nearest to or touches first has to respond with the name of an animal, bird, fish or reptile that inhabits that element. For earth you might say mole, for air, bat, or for water, sea lion. For fire you do not have to say anything. There must be no repetition. If somebody does name a creature already mentioned, he is out of the game. Players throw the hanky on after their turn, again naming an element. It can be the same one time and time again.

● **Flour game:** For this game, you will need 2lb or so of flour and some large wrapped coins. Put the flour (not wetted) in a pudding basin with the coins mixed in. Put a plate on the top and a weight to press the flour down. When it is compacted and you are ready to play, turn the "cake" out on to a plate. Players take turns to cut a slither and put it aside. This will expose the edge of a coin in the remaining section. The challenge is for players to extract a coin with their teeth. If part of the cake collapses, the player pays a forfeit. Otherwise the coin is his.

JESSICA GORST WILLIAMS

What to wear, page 10

MY PERFECT WEEKEND

SIR JOHN HARVEY-JONES

Industry troubleshooter

Where would you go?
To Goa. I love India and visit fairly frequently. I was in charge of ICI's Indian operation for a while.

How would you get there?
I would fly Air India.

Where would you stay?
In one of the individual chalets at the Fort Aguada Beach resort. Fort Aguada was built in about 1960 for a meeting of Commonwealth premiers, and is now run very well by the Taj Group of hotels. It is on a promontory in the Indian Ocean, and the beaches are marvellous.

Who would be your perfect companion?
My wife, Beny. We've been married nearly 45 years and are tremendous pals; we never stop chattering.

What essential piece of clothing would you take?
Bathing costume.

What medicines would you take?
I support ICI by taking Tenormin, a beta-blocker for my heart condition, every day. I would also have to take malaria pills and Collis Browne's mixture.

What would you eat?
Whenever I am in India I either eat vegetarian curries or fish curries because the meat isn't very good and the vegetarian cooking is absolutely out of this world.

What would you have to drink?
Fresh lime juice. I don't drink alcohol — my doctors don't like it.

Which books would you take?
The books I'm reading at the moment: *Dunster* by John Mortimer, *The Old Patagonian Express* by Paul Theroux, Nigel Lawson's autobiography, *A View from No. 11*.

What would you watch on television?
The whole point of a holiday is not to watch television.

What luxury would you take?
A short-wave radio on which to get the World Service.



Who would be your least welcome guest?
Saddam Hussein.

Which newspapers or journals would you read?
The ones I read the whole time: *The Times*, *Telegraph*, *Daily Mail* and *The Economist*.

What three things would you leave behind?
The weather, Maastricht, and worry about the economy.

What three things would you most like to do?
1. Visit St Francis Cathedral. 2. Eat fish curries in a local restaurant. 3. Talk endlessly with Indians. I always get into fascinating discussions, particularly with the women, who are tremendous talkers.

To whom would you send a postcard?
To my daughter and granddaughter and all the people at Shezan, my favourite Indian restaurant in London, the nearest you can get to being in India.

What souvenir would you bring home?
Moonstones. I'm very fond of them, my women like them and they are difficult to get in England.

What would you like to find when you got home?
That *Troubleshooter* was over and done with. I enjoy making the programmes but I don't like watching myself on television.

Interview by Rosanna Greensweet

The view from your armchair



Turning over new leaves: far left, view from the terrace at La Mortola, Italy, from *The English Garden Abroad* by Charles Quest-Ritson (£20).

Above, tulip "Blue Parrot" from *Tulips* by Peter Arnold (£25).

Inset left, detail from the section on common holly in *Trees* by Alan J. Coombes, one of the "Eyewitness Handbooks" series (£16.99).

Below left, a photograph from *The Garden Trellis* by Sir Roy Strong, in the "Library of Garden Detail" series (£5.99).

Francesca Greenoak on the pick of the season's crop of gardening books, to give or to keep

There are days when the weather is so awful that armchair gardening is the only option even for the most stalwart of gardeners, and Christmas is a good time to build up a stock of good books. As the winter deepens, it makes a pleasant contrast to look outward to other places and warmer seasons.

Wonderful photographs give a real sense of the lavender-scented heat of the Provençal summer in *Gardens in Provence* by Louise Jones (Flammarion, £30), and the photographs by Vincent Motte beautifully complement this mouth-watering record, written out of a 20-year affection for the gardens of this region of France.

Down to earth and with practical advice, *The Complete Manual of Organic Gardening*, edited by Basil Caplan (Headline, £25), offers a thorough grounding and explanation of environmentally positive gardening, with excellent contributions by experts such as Joy Larkcom and Patrick Hughes.

The *RHS Encyclopedia of Gardening*, edited by Christopher Brickell (Dorling Kindersley, £29.95), is best of this year's prodigious Royal Horticultural Society output. It aims to be all things to all gardeners, and very nearly is.

It is always exciting to learn about good plants, especially now that garden centres, small nurseries and specialist growers are becoming more adventurous in their output.

Perennials by Roger Phillips and Marilyn Rix (Dorling Kindersley, £17.50) consists of two volumes divided into early and late flowering perennials. It gives us a stupendous glimpse into some of the riches of the plant world.

Eight pages on red-hot poker, for example, explore the range and distinctiveness of different types: reds, oranges, greens and lemon-yellows, brash and dainty.

Allen Coombes, botanist at the Hillier arboretum, has produced an excellent, well-illustrated tree identification book, *Trees* (Dorling Kindersley Eyewitness Handbooks series, £16.99, paperback £12.99), a good complement to Alan Mitchell's *Pocket Guide to Trees* (Collins, £6.95), although it does not cover quite so many species.

A treat for any gardener, William Stearn's *Dictionary of Plant Names for Gardeners* (Cassell, £16.99) has just been



reissued in a revised and augmented edition. Marvelously erudite and informative, it discloses the history hidden within names, and makes impenetrable scientific names seem simple.

Recently initiated into the exuberant world of willows, I was delighted to find that Christopher Newsholme, "convinced that a comprehensive study of willows was overdue", went ahead and wrote one. The excellent *Willows, the Genus Salix* (Batsford, £29.99) will introduce many desirable willows to gardeners.

There is a superior sort of stocking filler abroad this Christmas: try the unusually informative Pavilion mini-series. *The Garden Gate/Bench/Path/Trellis*, by Rosemary Verey, Mirabel Osler,

Patrick Taylor and Sir Roy Strong respectively, cost £5.99 each.

Alternatively, Malcolm Hillier's alluring quartet, *Fragrant Herbs/Garlands/Poies/Bouquets* (Dorling Kindersley, £4.99) with their softly scented pages, will persuade even the least dextrous among us to have a go at plant ornaments and decoration.

For children, the well-illustrated and practical *My First Garden Book* (Dorling Kindersley, £5.99) demonstrates activities that can be carried out indoors or on a window sill. All the equipment and methods are clearly described so that even non-gardening families can enjoy bulbs, collecting and growing seed and taking cuttings, and making hanging baskets or miniature knot gardens.

BEST BUYS

NATIONAL Trust membership (081-464 1111) gives free entry to gardens and properties (also by reciprocal arrangement to National Trust for Scotland properties). Individual membership £23, £13 for each additional member at the same address, family £42. The National Trust for Scotland (031-226 5922) has a splendid complement of gardens and other properties (reciprocal arrangement with the NT). Individual membership £22, family £36. Both are good value for keen garden visitors, with magazines and handbooks included. Membership of HDRA, the Centre for Organic Gardening (0203 303517), brings a quarterly magazine, free advice, entry to the display gardens. Individual £14; family £17.

WEEKEND TIPS

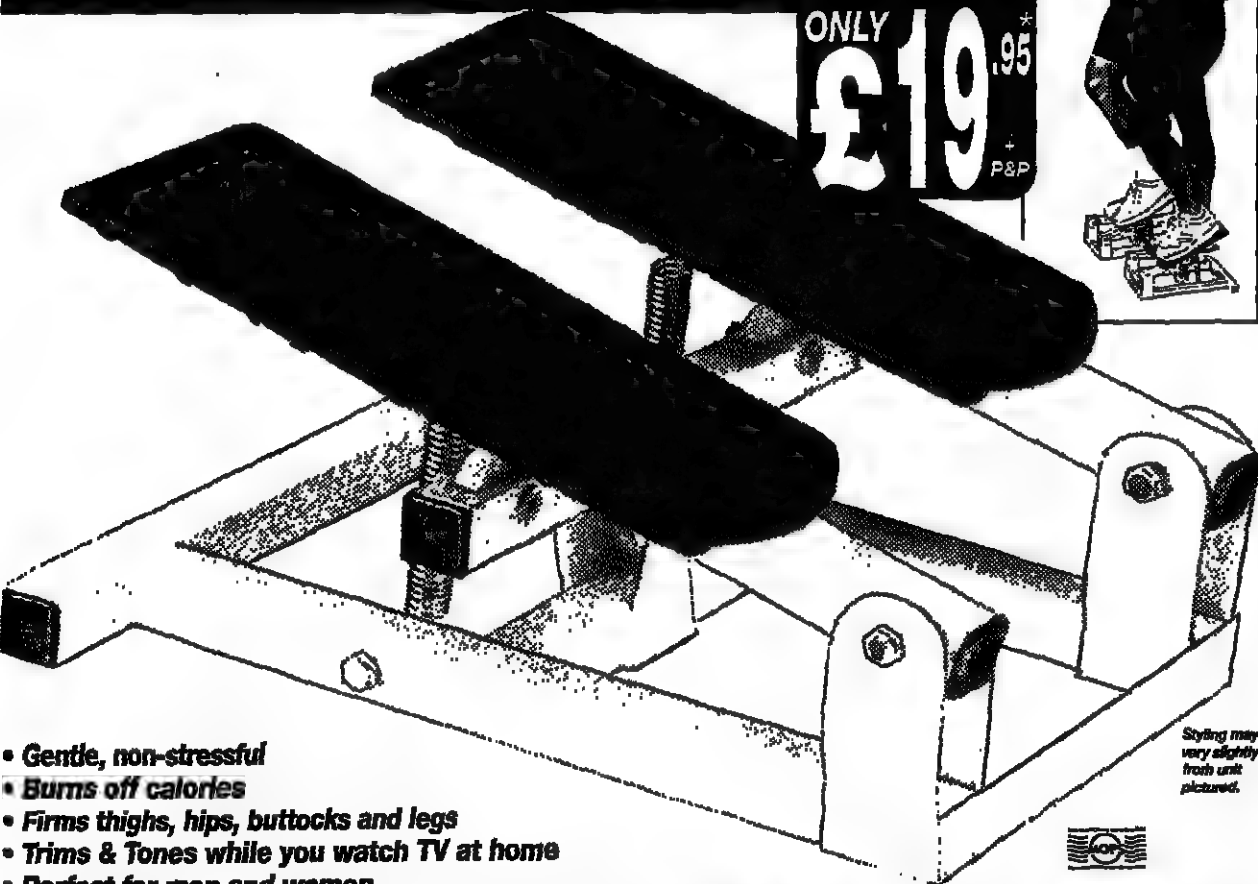
- Be careful not to trample wet or frosty lawns.
- Pick flowers of winter iris (iris unguicularis, above) to have a succession of flowers.
- Weed, clear and mulch around the bases of fruit trees.
- Wipe tools with an oily rag or WD-40 after use.
- Make sure that the glass in greenhouses and conservatories is clean so plants get maximum light.
- Plant trees and shrubs, providing the ground is neither waterlogged nor frozen.

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best foot forward,
in all the
wrong places

8.40, have missed it altogether. It was part of a Channel Four *Travelog*, that benevolent society which dispatches needy hacks around the globe and allows them to express their gratitude by prancing about in front of the camera in a frantic attempt to stop people going to put the kettle on, and it was subtitled *The Borders*, because that is where they had sent me to prance. Not only prance: I fished the Tweed, I rode herd on sheep, if it isn't rode flock, I chewed the fat with bagpiper and laird, I strolled the pretty streets of Kelso and Melrose and Peebles and sang their deserved praises, and generally, or so I had imagined, did

my bit for at least a part of that Britain which Mr Stern, I would humbly suggest, holds no more dear than I.

None of this, however, counted with him. For, at one point in these travels, I took a local bus, so that the director could shoot Scotland hurtling past my ear, and the seat opposite being empty and the director feeling that I should show myself to be a bit knackered from my travels, call it human interest, love, I put my feet up on it. It was at this moment, I now learn, that the entire Stern family leapt shrieking from their own *fauteuils*. Had I the faintest idea what there might have been on my shoe? Did I not realise what diseases could be thus transmitted? Had I no regard for others who might later use the bus? Was this not typical of the Media these days? Was it any wonder that the country was in its present parlous state? Could anyone be surprised at the contempt in which the rest of the world now held this once-great nation?

All very harrowing, but I can live with it: my shoes were spotless. I burden you with this story now only to show the envious that the life of us top movie stars is not all stretch limos, plant women, Bel Air pleasure-domes and Oscar ceremonies. Have you, for example, the remotest idea how many letters Humphrey Bogart received from moral curators furiously clamouring to point out that the rag he used to wipe the boiler of the *African Queen* was absolutely filthy? Can you begin to guess the number of complaints which inundated poor Trevor Howard for keeping his hat on in the *Brief Encounter* buffet?

Idols we may be, but, even as it worships, the mortal world is never slow to spot our feet of clay. Particularly if they're on a bus seat.

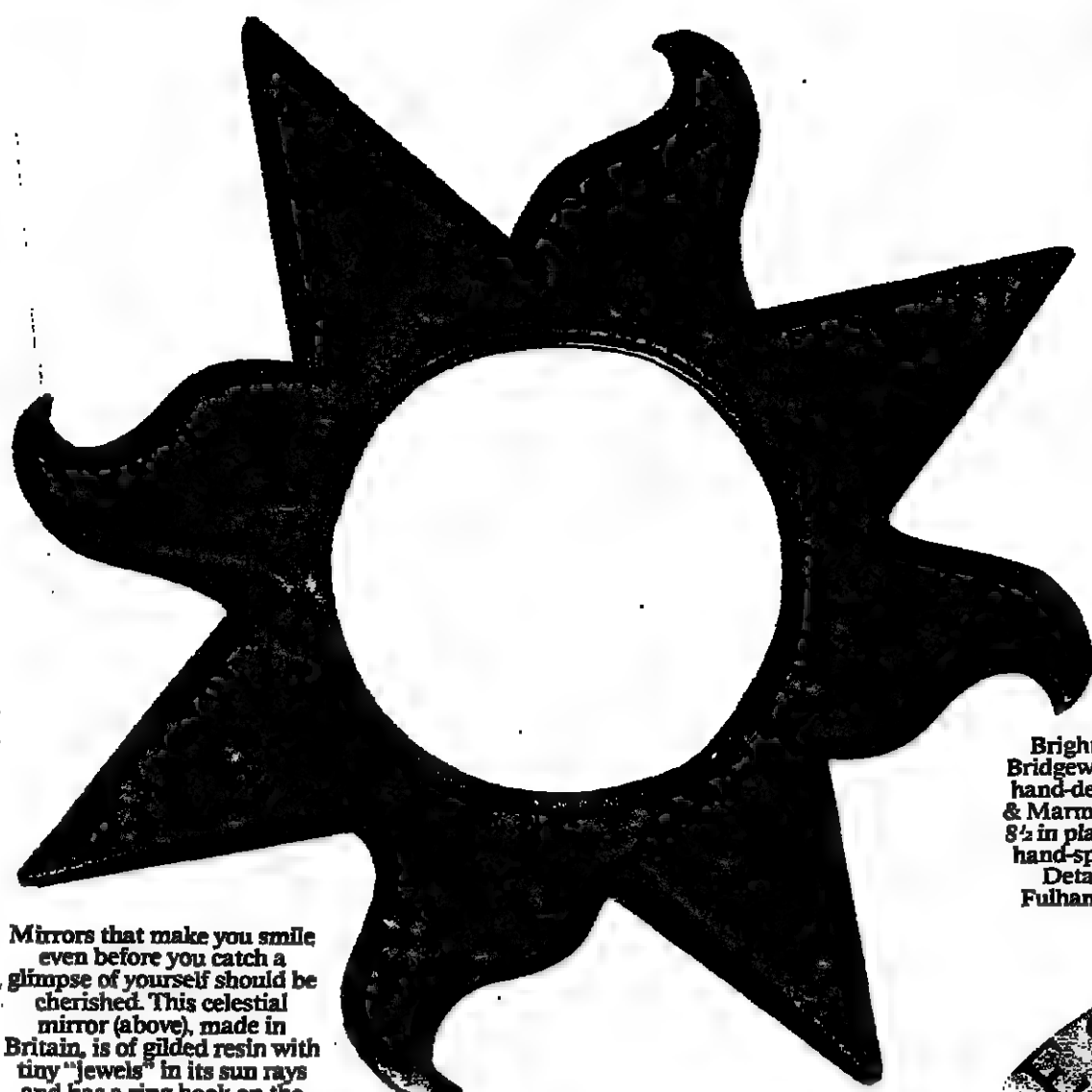
SATURDAY DECEMBER 12 1992

SHOPPING

9

Nicole Swengley finds good-looking gifts for less than £25 — some ready-wrapped

Designed to bring pleasure



Hand-painted papier mache bowl (above), 15in diameter, from a range of fruity platters by Joe Libra, £19.95 at the V&A museum shop or by mail order (plus £3.95 p&p) from V&A Enterprises, Crosswell Road, London SW7 2RL (071-938 8438).

Brighten breakfast with Emma Bridgewater's ceramics (below). The hand-decorated earthenware Toast & Marmalade and Bubble & Squeak 8½in plates cost £8.95 each, and the hand-spunged black plate is £9.45. Details of stockists from 739 Fulham Road, London SW6 5UL (071-371 9033).

Mirrors that make you smile even before you catch a glimpse of yourself should be cherished. This celestial mirror (above), made in Britain, is of gilded resin with tiny "jewels" in its sun rays and has a ring hook on the back. It costs £24.95 from The Bath House at Liberty, Regent Street, London W1 (for mail order, 071-734 1234).

Memorable gifts need not plunder the purse. But they must be well designed and distinctively packaged to make their mark. If they are useful as well as attractive, so much the better. Given that we are all more visually aware these days — thanks to the 1980s designer decade and to television's progressive graphics — presentation is all-important. A pleasing box or imaginative fabric bag can make unwrapping a present so much more exciting. Of course, it is possible to add your own creative touches. However, those without the time to do so will appreciate companies such as Printed Matter (071-491 2080), Laurel (0602 504644) and Kiker Greer (0621 784647) for the way their products are packaged, doing away with the need to invest in expensive, non-reusable giftwrap. All the gifts shown here are available at stockists nationwide or by mail order.

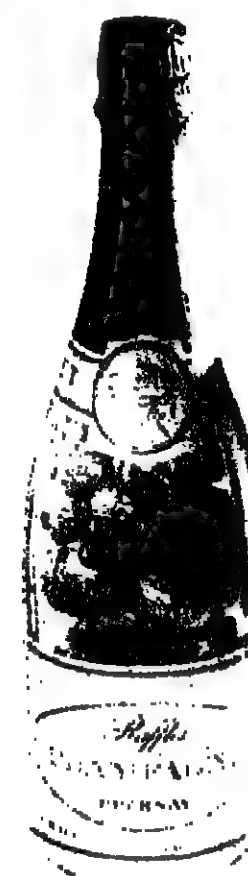
Printed Matter stationery set in a 1950s-inspired Liberty print, "Sun Moon" fabric bag (right). Inside is a hardback notebook, a maritime-inspired card with navigation chart, a model yacht, a compass and a tiny notebook with detachable starfish. £18.95 at Liberty, Regent Street, London W1 (mail order 071-734 1234).



A celebratory gift in the shape of a glass champagne bottle (below) filled with 50 gold foil-wrapped dark chocolates, weighing 12oz. £11 plus £4 p&p by mail order from Raffles Wine, The Cellars, Spring Mill Estate, Avening Road, Nailsworth, Glos GL6 0BU (0453 834980). Truffle refills can also be ordered at £8.50 inc p&p.



New from the artist Matthew Rice is this children's briefcase (above) of recycled card, decorated with Noah's Ark and wooden animals on the front, a toy stable on the back and a map of the world inside. £21. For stockists contact Ricepaper, 739 Fulham Road, London SW6 (071-371 9077).



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Essential etiquette of musical bumps

Children's parties have gone beyond an iced cake and pass the parcel. Joe Joseph guides the unwary

Not all that long ago, children attending a friend's birthday party would be happy to pass an afternoon working their way through a few unadventurous party games and a pre-prepared tray of so-so food — half an egg sandwich, some iced sponge cake, a tangerine and maybe a small chocolate bar.

Nowadays, you can get away with offering birthday party guests a pre-prepared tray of food only if the tray is being served by air hostesses and the party is en-route to Florida, by jumbo, to visit Disney World for the afternoon. Anything less and children will think seriously about instructing their lawyers.

The half-hour conjuring show by the local Mr Magic has been replaced by a private performance in your own back garden by the Moscow State Circus: hide-and-seek has given way to themed Camelot costume parties in the ballroom at Claridge's.

These high expectations from seen-it-all youths are a by-product of one of the inescapable drawbacks of hosting a children's party, regardless of whether the party is being held to celebrate a birthday, Christmas, Halloween or Guy Fawkes night: that while young children may make their own mess, they don't make their own entertainment, which puts the burden of ingenuity on the adults.

There are several old laws of party-giving, such as that although tastes in enjoyment vary, when it comes to wearing fancy dress, most people over the age of four prefer to spend the evening re-organising their sock drawer. Another is that champagne is wasted on the young, but an unopened jero-bomb makes an exciting and unpredictable alternative to a heavily wrapped pencil-case as the centrepiece of a game of pass the parcel.

But many other formal ground rules for children's parties in particular, and children's etiquette in general, have changed, and this may be



Above: Helen (left), aged eight, wears white ruffe-front shirt, £15.99, Marks & Spencer. Kill, £17.95, Monday's Child. Mail Order Catalogues (0235 59527). Shoes, £29.50, Gillingham & Co (365 Fulham Palace Road, London SW6). Allegra (centre), aged ten, wears green and white spot shirt and skirt, £49.95; red belt, £3.95; Monday's Child. Tights, £5.95, Patricia Wigan (19 Walton Street, London SW3). Shoes, £38, Buckle My Shoe (19 St Christopher's Place, SW1). Anna, aged nine, wears white frilly shirt, £15.95; kill, £17.95; blue cardigan, £19.95; all Monday's Child. Tights, £5.95, Patricia Wigan.

PHOTOGRAPHS: John Hudson STYLIST: Victoria Pymon

a good moment for behind-the-scenes adults to learn a few current guidelines for acceptable behaviour.

The first hurdle is choosing what your child should wear to a party. Fortunately, etiquette allows reasonable freedom for personal expression in this area, with one strict proviso: unless your child has shown a precocious interest in thigh-

slapping music or national socialism, there is never a good enough reason to dress him in grey suede lederhosen.

It also falls on parents to prepare their child socially and psychologically for the party to which they have been invited. For example, if your son, when given a plate of sticky food, simply rubs it diligently into the nearest kebab, make sure

you warn the host by sending the boy out with a badge on his lapel that reads "Expect Nil By Mouth". Also, teach your child that just because grown-ups may laugh when told a joke, he should not assume those same grown-ups will laugh as fulsomely each time the joke is repeated: unless the joke shows up one of the grown-ups' close personal acquaintances in a cruel light, in which case the amusing tale can be repeated as frequently as the young raconteur wishes.

You could do worse than train your child, when within earshot of adult hosts, to turn to a friend and say: "Of course, my mother agrees completely with what your mother said about *insert name of host/hostess here*." All benefit from this considerate gesture: the host's mind is sharply diverted from the dreariness of spooning out trifle, and your child is guaranteed attentive coddling throughout the party as the inquisitive host/hostess dings near in the hope of gaining further insight into the absent mothers' conniving treachery.

If you are the host, there may be moments of despair as you notice that your child's friends show no signs of being impressed by your coffee table books; or when you realise that the caterers you hired have not appreciated that the mop and tin pad that stand in the corner of your drawing room are an acid comment on modern British society "conceptualised" by a sculptor whom many consider a future contender for the Turner Prize: you know the caterers have not appreciated this because they have filled the pail with floor cleaner, and are using it to mop the kitchen lino.

To overcome your anguish, focus on the happier aspects of playing host to children. These include the following:

a) While rich children may seem spoilt and obnoxious, they are also easy to fleece at poker, if you can pull them away from the party for half an hour. Children can never remember whether a flush beats a straight of mixed suits.

b) While a roomful of children behaving boorishly and talking trash may seem an odd way for God to flaunt his handiwork, console yourself with the thought that, unlike politicians whom you actually voted into office, your guests



Above: Magnus (left), aged six, wears red shirt, £12.95; green shorts, £13.95; Monday's Child. Blue socks, £5.95; Patricia Wigan. Shoes, £34.99; Gillingham. Michael, aged four, wears white shirt, £21.95; navy velvet britches, £36; blue socks, £5.95; all Patricia Wigan. Blue button shoes, £34.99; Gillingham.

Top: Allegra wears navy velvet skirt and jacket, £93; Anna wears grey wool dress, £73; Helen wears tartan dress with collar, £73; all Patricia Wigan. Magnus wears velvet britches, £36; pale blue Oxford shirt, £20.95; blue cardigan, £29.50; Patricia Wigan. Michael wears white shirt with Peter Pan collar, £21.95; velvet britches, £36; long navy socks, £5.95; all Patricia Wigan. Navy button shoes, £34.99, Gillingham. (Tops from Harrods.)

are not being paid salaries and secretarial expenses for behaving this way.

c) Treat the party as an opportunity to sharpen your anthropological insight. The child who offers to settle a dispute between fellow guests during a game of Blind Man's Buff in return for a bite of both disputants' fun-sized Mars Bars is the budding lawyer.

And watch out for the boy who unilaterally declares himself winner of every game and silences protest by threatening to lock dissenters in the coats cupboard. He is a despot in the making who may soon be looking for a small nation state to tyrannise, where life may well be a party, but not one to which you would want to be invited.

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I saw munkissing

Jane Owen takes her family to visit 'the one and only Father Christmas' in the Arctic

When I was a child, a trip to Santa's grotto involved going to the local department store and sitting in a cardboard sleigh while alpine scenery scrolled past. Department stores still offer similar arrangements, but last weekend my family eschewed them in favour of visiting Santa in the Finnish part of the Arctic Circle: a day's flying, transfer at Helsinki, one day frolicking in the snow and meeting Santa, and the third day travelling back to London.

If you are wondering about the sanity of this, so am I. But the Arctic Circle has an edge of glamour over most department stores. From our hotel in Rovaniemi, Jeeps took us five miles across the Arctic Circle to Santa's Post Office — a curious building rather like a 1960s church, which stocks Santa dolls, candles, wooden bells, cards and so on — at a price.

My elder daughter nosed around the corner of the Post Office to see Santa, fully robed, grey curly beard flowing down his front.

"Hello, little girl, what is your name?"

"Rose."

"That's a pretty name. Have you been a good girl?"

"Yes."

"Then I shall stick a badge to your hat, and here are some



We know how to sleigh

more to take back to your friends." The paper badges said "Santa Comes from Finland". This is important to Finland, although it hardly explains why Santa Claus should have taken up residence there. Santa Claus Finland International has sponsored historical research to delve into this question. The research will be

TIME OFF



I saw my kissing Santa Claus



ten reindeer finally quit their traces, all too often they end up on the dinner table

pleted in a couple of
ths, when the facts will be
ted to fit Finland's Santa
is story: nothing if not
cientious.
fore the arrival of Santa
as International a few years
the old Santa authorities
into financial difficulties.
it organisation wouldn't
400,000 letters a year to
ver from children around

the world? So the One and
Only Santa, as described by
our guide, was privatised and
became "connected" to Santa
Claus Finland International,
which is now deciding whether
to charge for the letter service
executed by Santa's computer.
The Finns themselves have
dozens of Santas for home
consumption, many of them
helped by elves. For a fee of

250 Finnish Marks (about
£33), rent-a-Santa and his ren-
an-elf will appear for 15 min-
utes at your home on
Christmas Eve to distribute Yo
Ho Ho and your presents.
Our snow adventure began
at first light, about ten o'clock.
It was 14 degrees below, with
glorious blue skies and a chill-
ing breeze which sank its teeth
through our warmest clothes.

At Lapland Safaris we were
zipped into felt and plastic
boots, thick leather gloves and
padded suits for a snowmobile
ride up the frozen river
Ounasjoki, with the children
tucked into a fur-covered sleigh
towed behind. Snow-laden for-
est and scrub dipped down to
the frozen banks on either side
as we turned into a clearing
with a wooden, wigwam-like
building, called a *kota*, beside
an open fire.

To complete the picture
postcard scene, two
reindeer tacked up in
pretty Lapp colours waited to
pull us around a fenced enclo-
sure. We trotted around se-
dately, my daughters on my
lap. Matti, our Lapp host,
dressed in the traditional, em-
broided cylindrical hat and
long shirt/skirt costume, of-
fered warming blackcurrant
and spice drink, like *gluhwein*
without the alcohol, from a
blackened kettle heating over
the fire, and invited us into the
kota for a Crossing the Arctic
Circle ceremony. Matti as-
sured us that in our next life we
would become part of his
reindeer herd, and smudged
black marks on our foreheads
where our antlers were to grow.

This was truly an odd wel-
come, since our next stop was a
lunch of Matti's reindeer stew.
By 2.30 darkness had fallen.
Headlights on, we travelled
back along the frozen river,
snow sparkling like a glittery
Advent calendar.

■ Jane Owen was a guest of the
Finnish Tourist Board (071-839
4048). Santa Claus and snow
safari three-day holidays in Lap-
land start at about £585 a person
with discounts for children.



Climb every rock, nook and cranny to the top

Truth and beauty? Ronald Faux finds both on a misty crag in Cumbria

DAVID REED



Facing up: modern climbers use a plethora of safety aids

never fell. Geoffrey Winthrop
Young's sombre thought in his
poem "The Cragman" is
hardly relevant these days:

For what is there in all the
world for me but what I know
and see?

And what remains of all I see
and know, if I let go?

The modern hard man
stitched to the cliff with protec-
tion simply drops into space.

climbers up the rope and tries
again. They call it "flying".
Modern ropes have great
strength, and high-tech metals
used in the "ironmongery" will
"contain" the energy of a heavy
fall. Chalk and resin increases
grip on fingertips. Boots have
"sticky" rubber soles to in-
crease friction.

Climbers aiming for the top
grades train hard. To all of this

must be added the shadowy
element of psychological
strength: the commitment,
confidence and willpower to
tackle an exposed stretch of
rock, angling arms and legs
seemingly in defiance of gravi-
ty. One conquistador of the
overhang has built holds into
the ceiling of his garage,
across which he moves like a
gecko.

For climbers of mature
years, the armoury of modern
protection puts routes they
once regarded as an ultimate
challenge within their grasp.

Even so, despite all the
safeguards, rock climbing re-
mains undeniably high-risk.
Mr Bonington has explored
rock faces and mountains all
over the world, but says his
closest shave came unexpected-
ly on a route named Megaton
on Sgurr a'Mhadaidh on the
Isle of Skye. It demands com-
bined tactics to climb an over-
hang with the leader protected
by a small wired brass nut
jammed in a crack, the rope
clipped into the wire.

He remembers reach-
ing up above his part-
ner's head for "a
perfect jug-handle of a hold. I
grabbed it and the whole thing
came away in my hand. I fell
back, hurtling down the cliff.
Jim held the rope and was
pulled straight off his ledge
and there we both were, sus-
pended over a huge drop on
one tiny brass nut." Fortunately,
the nut held.

On Gimmer, the drizzle has
turned to rain that hisses
against the rock. The route is
classic, first climbed in 1918
and therefore well-worn. A
cone-shaped wedge of metal
slotted into a crack and clipped
into my rope immediately im-
proves the feeling of security.
Rain is pouring down my neck,
but with 15ft to go and the full
200ft plunge of Gimmer under
my heels, I move one foot or
hand at a time.

After a final pull on to the
crag top, I tie the rope to a
secure point at the top. Relief
mingles with satisfaction. Safe-
guarded, my partner climbs
the pitch quickly and easily. He
arrives at the top, features
creased by a big grin.

True, Mr Bonington, climb-
ing rocks is fun.

SINGLE HIGHLAND MALT SCOTCH WHISKY.

GLENMORANGIE

JOHNNY URQUHART, Head Cooper.

HAVING TOILED ALL WEEK - and sometimes all weekend - upon the oaken casks which impart the buttery translucence and flowery nose to the malt, our Head Cooper heads for the river on a Friday afternoon. Here, by the rushy reaches of the Carron, he pits his wits against the salmon heading upriver, notes the flowers along the bank and the birds of the river, and forgets even his beloved barrels as he fills his mind with the sound of "the water tickling away."

And though he may return to Glenmorangie empty-handed, the skill and patience of the craftsman shine through in his explanation. "Simply catching fish," he will tell you, "is not necessarily the object of the exercise."



HANDCRAFTED by the SIXTEEN MEN of TAIN.

Good shepherds in Mayfair

Ruth Gledhill visits
a Jesuit church
associated with the
rich, but which
does much for the
deprived and sick



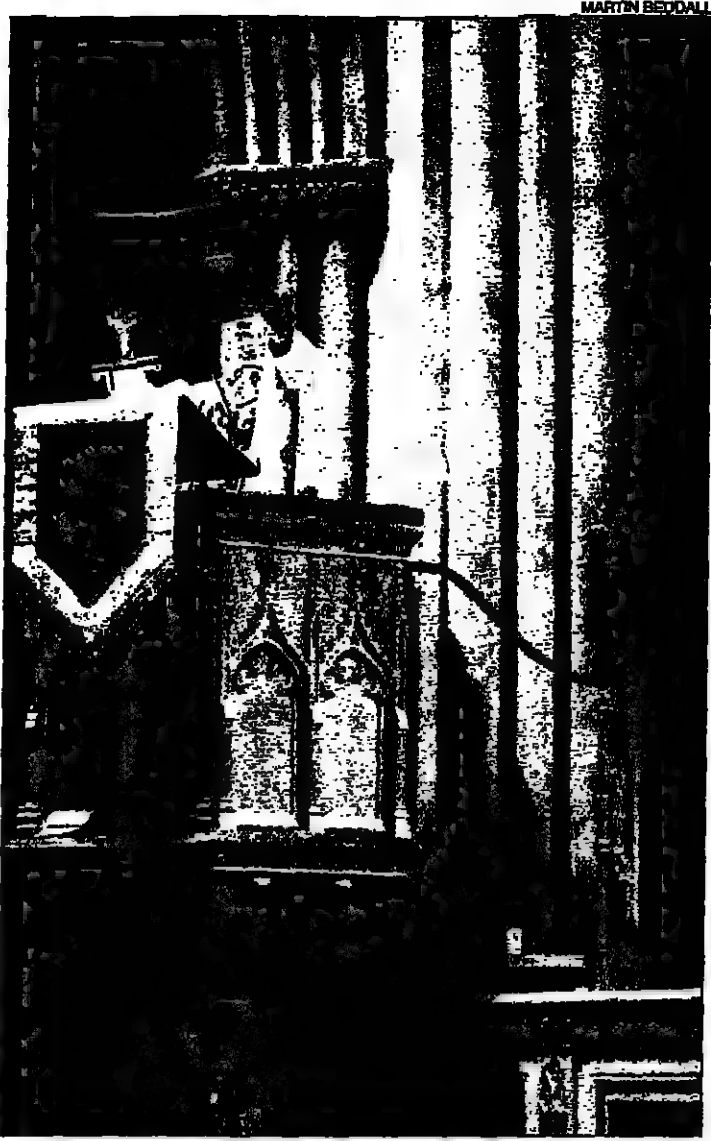
FARM Street, the Jesuit church in the heart of Mayfair, London, has gained an unfair reputation of exclusivity, thanks partly to its privileged site, and partly to the fact that it is associated with the rich and famous, and with novelists such as Evelyn Waugh. Less is made of the social action of the parish and the Jesuit fathers. The church has its own branch of the Society of St Vincent de Paul, parishioners who help the poor, and is linked with the Daughters of Charity in nearby Blandford Street, who work with the sick and the deprived.

For an Anglican, unable to take communion in a Roman Catholic church and thus offered a blessing instead, the priests at Farm Street (officially known as the Church of the Immaculate Conception) give one of the most spiritual blessings in London. Even today the Jesuits have a reputation as a somewhat sinister society, a hangover from 1580, when the Jesuit mission came to England from Rome and was seen as part of a Papist plot to overthrow Elizabeth I. Subsequently, Jesuits were thought by many to be the prime culprits in the Gunpowder Plot of 1605, although they had in fact worked hard to discourage the conspiracy.

After the Catholic Emancipation of 1829, when restrictions on belief and worship were removed from Roman Catholics, Jesuits were allowed to stay, but they were not allowed to recruit novices and were thus expected to die out. Fortunately for the homeless and deprived, not only did the Jesuits ignore these restrictions and survive, but they went from strength to strength.

Of the eight available Sunday masses at Farm Street, about 500 Roman Catholics, a few Anglicans and I chose to attend the only Latin mass, at 11am.

Fortunately for all adult survivors of a modern education, congregants are issued with a booklet with an English translation alongside the Latin. This was not the old Tridentine mass, which can be celebrated with the special permission of the diocesan bishop only, but the new order of mass in line with the decrees of the



Good book: parish priest Fr Michael Beattie celebrates mass

The Church of the Immaculate Conception, Farm Street, London W1 (071-493 7811)

PARISH PRIEST: Fr Michael Beattie SJ
SERMON: Brief and to the point, intellectually challenging but also accessible. Jesuit theologians sometimes preach***
ARCHITECTURE: Decorated gothic, lofty***
MUSIC: Out of this world***
LITURGY: Solemn Latin mass surprisingly easy to follow, with musical notation and English translation***
AFTER SERVICE CARE: Excellent coffee and tea. Priest is busy preparing for next mass, but worshippers happy to chat***
* stars are awarded up to a maximum of five

Second Vatican Council (1962-65).

Many young Catholics from the Continent were present, and some said they preferred the Latin mass. "Whichever country we are in, we feel at home because we are all speaking the same language," one French student said.

Apart from the patenoster and the occasional *Deo gratias*, we took little active part, but instead sat back, stood up or knelt down to

enjoy the world-renowned Farm Street Singers' spectacular rendition of Mozart's *Sparrows*. As is universal in the Catholic church, readings were in the vernacular. The Second Reading and bidding prayers were led by women. More than half the 30 official readers for the 11 o'clock solemn mass at Farm Street are women. At the lively coffee morning which followed the service I was

welcomed enthusiastically by a succession of voluble Irish, French and English men and women. Many Anglican churches with seating for 900 people seem over-large, but Farm Street seems barely big enough, with more than 1,400 people of all ages at mass each Sunday, plus 250 at daily mass.

The order, founded in Rome by St Ignatius of Loyola, was established by Pope Paul III in 1540. The church, the work of the architect J.J. Scoles, dates from the 1840s, and was built in the stables and coachmen's quarters in a street which took its name from the 18th-century Hay Hill Farm.

There seemed to be a marked absence of children and babies, until the parish priest, Fr Michael Beattie SJ, pointed out that they were all in the "crying room", the chapel of St Ignatius, to the left of the high altar. The chapel has been sealed with soundproof glass. A loudspeaker pipes in the music and liturgy for the parents, but only the nearest congregants hear the occasional muted cry. St Ignatius, with his concern for the education of the young, would surely approve.

The church also has a super-efficient "deaf loop". This means the deaf hear the service but the occasional *sotto voce* comments in the sanctuary which Fr Beattie lets slip — giving new meaning to Christ's ability to make the deaf hear.

Unusually, this was the feast day for two saints. It was the last Sunday of the Catholic liturgical year and thus the feast of Christ the King; and the calendar date was the feast day of St Cecilia, patroness of music.

Anglicans who are considering going over to Rome should take into account the fact that many Catholic churches have two collections. Farm Street worshippers give a total of £1,400 a week. The first collection, usually the bigger, goes to the upkeep of the church and the second to diocesan work, social needs and education. To the delight of music lovers, Fr Beattie announced that the second collection, taken at the Latin mass, would from now on support the choir, all professional musicians. He has also said that a professional recording is to be made of the choir, led by Nicholas Danby, the internationally renowned organist.

● In line with early Christian tradition, the first Sunday mass is on Saturday night. Mass times: Sunday 7.30am, 8.30am, 10am, 11am (Latin), 12.15pm, 4.15pm, 6.15pm. Daily 7.30am, 8.30am, 12.05am, 1pm, 6pm. Saturday 7.30am, 8.30am, 11am. A confessor is always available at the church house at 114 Mount Street, London W1.



Scotland: Purves Hall, Berwickshire. Early 20th-century residence in ten acres. Master bedroom with en-suite bathroom and dressing room, five principal bedrooms with en-suite bathrooms/shower rooms, three secondary bedrooms, two bathrooms, three reception rooms, study, double garage, barn, walled garden, swimming pool, tennis court. About £275,000 (contact Savills, 031-226 6961).



Hertfordshire: The Mill House, Elsenham. Queen Anne former mill house with studio, stables and approximately ten acres. Five bedrooms, four bathrooms (two en suite), three reception rooms, farmhouse kitchen, utility room, conservatory, double garage and outbuildings. About £295,000 (contact Mullick Wells & Associates, 0279 755400).



Exmouth: Uplands, The Common. Detached Spanish-style villa in half an acre. Master bedroom with en-suite bathroom, guest suite, two bedrooms (one with en-suite facilities), three reception rooms (including a circular sitting room), kitchen/breakfast room, cloakroom, Summerhouse. About £275,000 (contact Fulfords 0395 273757).

FOR SALE

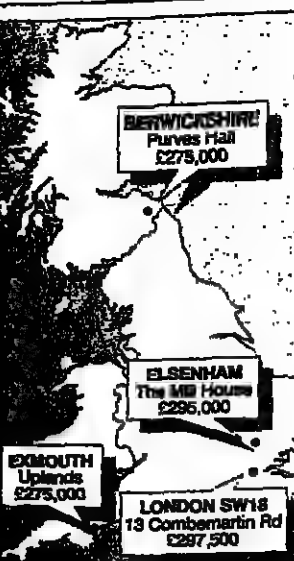
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London: 13 Combemartin Road, SW18.

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FIRST FOR QUALITY & RELIABILITY. TIMOD

Well, hello Messrs Soul

The righteous Charles & Eddie wouldn't lie to you — but it takes Otis Redding to tell the soulful truth

Although grunge and rap have grabbed the headlines this year, the charts have actually been steeped in the comparatively discreet sound of soul, or rather the modern pop variant which these days seems to pass for it.

For the second year running, the biggest-selling album in Britain is *Stars*, by Simply Red. Whitney Houston is back at the top of the singles chart, which currently hosts only two records that have achieved the rare distinction of being certified gold (400,000 copies): "End of the Road" by Boyz II Men, whose phenomenal success has single-handedly rescued the ailing Motown label, and "Would I Lie to You?" by Charles & Eddie, surely one of the most perfectly crafted pop-soul crossover singles ever made.

Charles Pettigrew from Philadelphia, Pennsylvania and Eddie Chacon from Oakland, California, met on a New York subway. Charles was carrying a Marvin Gaye album, which was sufficient reason for Eddie to strike up an enthusiastic conversation.

The episode is documented in a song called "N.Y.C." on the duo's debut album *Duophonic* (Stateside 0777 7971502). Built on a bell-like chord sequence, sampled from the old Buffalo Springfield number "For What It's Worth", "N.Y.C." incorporates all the ingredients which make this such a listenable album: a delicate funk rhythm, a lyric which combines mild social concern with an uplifting sense of fun and the soaring interplay of two voices that were made to

harmonise with each other to a degree not heard since the heyday of the Everly Brothers.

And there is plenty more, from the social realism of "Father To Son", with its clunky Stevie Wonder-style clavinet and keyboard strings, to the unadorned acoustic guitar balladry of "December 2", a lament for the AIDS-related death of a friend.

But for all its charm and craft, the vision of soul so plausibly presented on *Duophonic* is a slight affair compared to the work of the true soul greats.

It is a quarter of a century since Otis Redding took his last fateful aircraft flight, and to commemorate the anniversary Atlantic has released a raft of his albums: *Love Man* (8122-70294), *Tell The Truth* (8122-70295), *In Person At The Whisky A Go Go* (8122-70380) and the wondrous *Otis Blue* (7567-80318).

For those disinclined to invest in the full catalogue, there is also a new compilation of high points, *The Dock Of The Bay — The Definitive Collection* (9548-31709). It is an essential purchase for any modern soul fan at all curious to find out how good this sort of music once used to be.

Along with the rough edges and loose, ambient sound mixes, there is an explosive energy and towering authority to Redding's performances on a succession of classics — "I Can't Turn You Loose", "I've Been Loving You Too Long", "Pain In My Heart", "Hard To Handle", "Respect" and many more — which dwarfs the infinitely more refined efforts of latterday crooners.

DAVID SINCLAIR



Every brothers: Charles Pettigrew (left) and Eddie Chacon

Last Stratford Performances

RSC
ROYAL SHAKESPEARE COMPANY
Royal Insurance

The School of Night

by Peter Whelan

'Cracker of a play... commanding portrait of Elizabethan espionage at work... chilling... keeps one gripped until the very last moment'

Time Out

'Richard McCabe's excellent Christopher Marlowe'

Independent

Tickets available at £14 and £12 for: 14, 15 December; 4, 7, 13, 20, 25, 28 January 7.30pm.

The Other Place
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THEATRE: Benedict Nightingale finds even the cognoscenti held by *Carousel* at the Lyttelton

It's a winner, all round

Does Rodgers and Hammerstein's musical deserve the classic status implicitly claimed by this fine revival at the National? On the evidence of Nicholas Hytner's production, yes it does; almost as much as *Cats* and *Dolls* a decade ago, if hardly for the same reasons. Take away an irritatingly upbeat ending, and it has a simplicity and a sadness, an unpretentious solemnity that has seldom if ever been seen in a Broadway show before or since.

As if you didn't know, the plot involves the millgirl Julie Jordan and her doomed love for the fairground Barker Billy Bigelow. The scene in which they warily come together, admitting their attraction by not quite admitting it, is as deftly underwritten a scene as even Hammerstein penned; and at the National it is staged on an Andrew Wyeth hill, complete with colonial church at the top, and filled with a quiet intensity of feeling by Joanna Riding and Michael Hayden. They talk about blossom, the wind, themselves, and then they effortlessly, touchingly launch into that marvellously subjective love-song: "If I loved you, time and again I'd try to say all I want you to know..."

I don't think I have seen a better performed love-scene on the musical stage. But *Carousel* is a surprisingly tough-minded show for the 1940s, and this is just the beginning, not the happy ending. Billy is a drifter, a wastrel, and turns

out to be a bit of a wife-beater. I suppose Julie's reaction — "he ain't willingly or meaningfully bad" — will date the show for some. But Riding continues to play the role with such dignity, such sweet, unaffected gravity that the most ferocious of feminists would surely not dare accuse her of masochism or other fashionable sins.

Then disaster strikes. Discovering that Julie is pregnant, and seeing no other way to support his child, Hayden's flummoxed, callow Billy joins Phil Daniels's Jigger Craigin, who looks as if he has escaped from the local wessell wood, in a robbery. He dies in the attempt and goes to what, in Hytner's production, seems to be a blue hole in space, peopled by blue-coated Quakers and offering a nice view of a bluish Earth. The show ends with his redemptive visit back home, where he offers posthumous help to his teenage daughter, whose wild ways are troubling the ever-patient Julie.

That is a pretty unconventional idea, characteristic of the musical overall; yet only here, at what's clearly meant to be an inspirational high-school graduation ceremony, does conventional feeling seriously intrude. But never mind. We are still meant to sympathise more with poor, unruly Billy than with the hero of a parallel sub-plot, the aply named Mr Snow (a big, bushy Clive Rowe), who follows the entrepreneurial American dream with ritual

determination. Besides, any exasperation at Hammerstein's didactic whimsy quickly disappears as Patricia Routledge, the town's clam-bake queen, leads the company in a reprise of "You'll never walk alone".

With "June is busting out all over" and "Blow high, blow low" also on the menu, there is no resisting Rodgers's music, especially as the singing (take or leave some thinness and shrillness in the upper registers) is pretty good. Nor does the company have difficulty with the numbers choreographed by the late Kenneth MacMillan. Sometimes they whirl and twirl, sometimes jump and hop as if running in a sack race, sometimes cluster in a sort of cloggie hompope, and towards the end two of them seem almost to fly, but always they have an American directness and energy.

So it is with Hytner's production (sponsored by Oracle UK Ltd) as a whole. Bob Crowley's decor is often wonderful to look at — dour mill scenes evolving into an impressionistic fairground and thence into the circling steeds of the carousel itself; dark, askew streets for the robbery; a mossy island for replete clam-eaters to rest on — but visual effect is always subservient to emotional flow. There is nothing fussy, nothing glossy, not even anything gratuitously folksy here. A strong story unfolds, palpably holding even the National Theatre cognoscenti throughout. Who could wish for anything more?



Hope in their hearts: (from left) Janie Dee, Michael Hayden, Joanna Riding, Phil Daniels

Offenbach and Messager feature in a fine reissue of 1950s recordings

Bonbons defy sell-by date

The high noon of operetta recording on EMI was in the early 1950s. In London, Walter Legge embarked on his series of "champane operettas" with the Philharmonia, bringing in the stars of the Vienna State Opera — including Elisabeth Schwarzkopf, his wife — and making use of a young tenor, discovered on a scouting trip to Stockholm, called Nicolai Gedda. The Legge versions of Strauss and Lehár have rarely been absent from the catalogue.

In Paris there was a simultaneous operation for the French repertoire. Here the aims were rather more modest. There were no international names, and instead EMI's Pathe arm went for singers — and actors — steeped in the musical comedy tradition. Words and timing were paramount and the musical verve was supplied by Jules Gressier and the Lamoureux Orchestra.

Many of these Paris recordings have been out of the British catalogue for years, and it is a delight to welcome some of them back, edited and remastered, on three mid-price albums. The only regret is that the accompanying booklets are so skimpy. Anyone in search of even a plot resumé will have to look elsewhere.

Jacques Offenbach (0777 7 67515 2 & 8, 2 CDs) is represented by *La Vie Parisienne*, *Orphée aux enfers* and *La Belle Hélène*. The last-named comes over as having the strongest score and the wittiest libretto. Claude Devos is an ingratiating Paris and there are three deliciously comic performances from Michel Roux (Calchas) and Willy Clément (Agamemnon).



Gallic G&S: detail from the poster for Messager's *The Little Michus*, a story of twins swapped in the cradle

Clément also excels in the patter song of the gold-squandering Brazilian in *Vie Parisienne*, which was to become one of Jean-Louis Barrault's favourite roles. André Messager is probably best remembered in Britain for *Les Deux Pigeons*, thanks to the Ashon ballet. But he

also ran Covent Garden in the first decade of the century and before that conducted the first performance of Debussy's *Pelléas et Mélisande*. Three from his substantial output of operettas — *Véronique*, *Mon-sieur Beaucaire* and *Les Pâtes Michu* — are on 0777 7 67512 2 & 1 (2 CDs).

Véronique reaches its high point at the beginning of Act II with two hit numbers, both duets, one following hot on the heels of the other. The "Donkey Song" is perhaps the better known, but it is the "Swing Duet" — "Poussez, poussez" — which sticks indelibly in the mind once heard again.

Camille Mavran, rival to Claude Devos and blessed with one of those head-tenor voices the French once bred so easily, and Martha Angelici handle both to perfection. Both Mavran and Devos return in *Les Pâtes Michu*, a story of babies mixed up at birth — shades of *The Gondoliers*, or recent hospital news.

This has an especially strong last act — a time when some operetta composers start recycling their earlier numbers — and shows Messager's power as an orchestrator. *Opérette de toujours* (0777 7 67518 2 & 5, 2 CDs) has single items from *Lecocq* (*La Fille de Madame Angot*), Planquette (*Les Cloches de Corneville*) and Audran (*La Mascotte*). Angot occasionally gets an airing in French opera houses and has plenty of energy in the music, especially when sung, as here, by Lynda Dechary and Solange Michel.

But I prefer the more naïve charms of *Les Cloches* — it played in London as *The Chimes of Normandy* — which show Planquette as the musical descendant of Boieldieu. Even its story — of a marquis returning to claim his rightful inheritance — has something in common with the latter's *La Dame blanche*. It is a good candidate for revival — and so, of course, would be Offenbach's *La Belle Hélène*.

JOHN HIGGINS

THE SUNDAY TIMES

The politics of TV interviews

When the novelty of abrasiveness began to wane, television interviewers turned to body language, expressing their view of interviewees by means of gesture and facial contortion. We now have the triumph of props — following in the wake of Robin Day's glasses — such as David Dimbleby's ballpoint, Brian Walden's arm-pivoting or Jeremy Paxman's eyebrows. Politicians are now beginning to discover that you do not have to be particularly eloquent on television, or even truthful. Giving the appearance of mediocre and reliable normality can get you by...

Confronting the truth — politicians and interviewers
The Culture, in *The Sunday Times* tomorrow



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Come and solve all your Christmas present problems at the Royal National Theatre! Choose from gift tokens, special theatre books, prints and knitwear at the Christmas Fair and the now famous DAZZLE jewellery exhibition. Drop in to the Espresso Bar afterwards for a reviving cappuccino...

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1

BBC1

- 7.00 **Champion the Wonder Horse** (b/w) (2495298)
 7.25 **News and weather** (779947)
 7.30 **Children's BBC: Spider**. Musical cartoon (r) (s) (4640541) 7.35
 Animal World. Nature series with Derek Griffiths (r) (495558) 7.45
 Quick Draw McGraw. Cartoon western (r) (4645098) 7.50 **Live!**
 Bts. Cartoon fun with the forest peas (r) (710312) 8.15
 Chucklevision. Paul and Barry decide to visit the circus (2498034)
 8.35 **Bucky O'Hare**. Animated adventures with the floppy-eared
 super-hero (r) (1283015)
 9.00 **Going Live!** Philip Schofield and Sarah Greene are joined by Brian
 Henson, Kamit the frog, Linford Christie and Des O'Connor. Plus
 an interview with Macaulay Culkin, the star of *Home Alone II* (r)
 (7875522) 12.12 **Weather** (1166454)
 12.15 **Grandstand** introduced by Steve Rider. The line-up includes
 (subject to alteration) 12.20 and 12.55 **Football**: 1.10 **News**:
 12.40, 1.15, 1.50 and 2.25 **Racing** from Cheltenham: 12.45 **Pat**
 Taithe **Novices Chase**: 1.20 **Arington Bula Hurdle**: 1.55 **AF**
 Budge Gold Cup Handicap Chase, 2.30 **Chris Coley Racing Hurdle**
 (3653812): 1.30 **Skilling**: men's downhill championship from Val
 Gardena in Italy: 2.05 and 2.40 **Rallycross**: Autoglass British
 Grand Prix from Brands Hatch: 2.55 **Swimming**: Optrex ASA Winter
 Championship from Sheffield: 3.35 **Tennis**: first semi-final of the
 Campa Grand Slam Cup from Munich (9310218): 4.40 **Final**
 Score (594998). **Weather** (1166454): 4.55 **North Island Results**
 News with Chris Lowe. **Weather** (2537454) 5.15 **Regional news**
 and sport (2495314)
 5.20 **Dad's Army**. Mum's Army. Comedy with the wartime Home
 Guard, here entering the help of the town's women, including
 Carmen Silvera of *Allo! Allo!* Starring Arthur Lowe, John Le Mesurier
 and Clive Dunn (r) (Ceelex) (6301473)
 5.50 **Big Break**. Jim Davidson and referee John Virgo are joined by
 David Taylor, Nigel Bond and Joe Sewell. (Ceelex) (422558)
 6.20 **News**. House. **News** (2537454) 6.15 **Regional news**
 and sport (2495314)



Fit for a prize? Griff Rhys Jones and Mel Smith (7.15pm)

- 7.15 **The Royal Variety Performance** in the presence of the Prince and
 Princess of Wales, from London's Dominion Theatre, in aid of the
 Entertainment Artists Benevolent Fund. Leslie Caron introduces the
 three-hour spectacular, which pays homage to entertainers in
 comedy, theatre, music, dance and cinema. Among the artists
 taking part are Gloria Hunniford, Kiki Dee, Rita Jones, Jacqui Scott,
 Philip Gould, Paul Giamatti, Brian Conley, Phillis Schofield, Jimmy
 Tarbuck, Chris Tarrant, Gloria Estefan, Steve Cogan, Jim Bailey,
 Mel Smith, Griff Rhys Jones, Barry Manilow, Ronnie Corbett,
 Michael Ball, Sharon Gless, Mike Michaels, Tim Rice, Montserrat
 Caballé, Rita Rudner, Tom Conti, Yuri Kleiman, Nadezhda
 Gracheva and Michael Crawford. (Ceelex) (6680893)
 10.15 **News and Sport** with Martin Lewis (Ceelex). **Weather** (789096)
 10.35 **Match of the Day**. Bob Wilson introduces highlights of two of this
 afternoon's Premier League matches (r) (782308)
 11.35 **The Visitor** (1979) starring Mel Ferrer and John Huston in this
 derivative horror thriller in the style of *The Omen*. The head of an evil
 corporation decides that his wife must give birth to an unholy
 offspring. Directed by Michael J. Paradise (853388)
 1.10am **Weather** (355984)

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BBC2

- 8.00 **Open University: Science Preparatory Maths** — Angles (528096)
 8.15 **Continuing Education** — At the Edge of Glasgow's Desert
 (2561218)
 9.05 **Film: I Remember Mamma** (1949, b/w). Polish family drama
 starring Irene Dunne and Barbara Bel Geddes. A novelist recalls her
 childhood in turn-of-the-century San Francisco and her indomitable
 Norwegian mother. Directed by George Stevens (8364383)
 11.15 **Michael Barry's Choice Cuts**. Christmas alternatives (857831)
 11.25 **Blind's Eye View**. An aerial journey around some of Britain's 400
 islands, from Bishop Rock to Muckle Flugga (r) (1295251)
 12.15 **Film: Sun Valley Serenade** (1941, b/w). Minor romantic musical
 starring ice-skater Sonja Henie and John Payne. Glenn Miller and
 his band play hits such as "Chattanooga Choo Choo". Directed by
 H. Bruce Humberstone (733558)
 1.40 **Animation New**. A cat is observed with time-lapse (21543638)
 1.50 **News**. East. Includes a profile of the writer Anilav Ghosh (s)
 (3743725)
 2.20 **Tambulayn**. Episode eight of the 13-part drama following the
 fortunes of two sisters growing up in Pakistan. In Urdu with English
 subtitles (4011015)



Irish romance: Maureen O'Hara and John Wayne (3.00pm)

- 3.00 **Film: The Quiet Man** (1952). The John Ford season continues with
 his irresistible romantic comedy, starring John Wayne as a boxer
 who returns to his native Ireland and falls in love with Maureen
 O'Hara. A bawling, tender, sentimental film which won Ford his
 sixth Oscar. (Ceelex) (6719541)
 5.05 **The Summit Gala Concert**. Kirsty Wark introduces highlights of a
 concert given earlier this week at the Usher Hall, Edinburgh, as a
 tribute to the composer William Walton (r) (782308)
 6.00 **Scrutiny**. Nicholas Jones reports on the work of the House of
 Commons select committees (600). **Wales: Wales in Westminster**
 6.30 **News and Sport** with Chris Lowe. **Weather** (212683)
 6.45 **Pole to Pole**. Michael Palin completes his journey from the top of
 the world to the bottom (r). (Ceelex) (620386)
 7.35 **Music on 2: A Temporary Arrangement with the Sea**. A profile of
 the Dutch composer Joop Andriessen (s) (336588)
 8.35 **Have I Got News for You**. Peter Cook and Douglas Adams join
 the regulars in the satirical news quiz (r) (s) (747541)
 9.05 **Performance: Six Characters in Search of an Author**
 CHOICE: Pirandello's testing treatise on illusion and reality is
 revived in a version by the director Bill Bryden, which at least scores
 on originality. Bryden moves the play from the theatre to a British
 film studio in the 1940s where the director, who is also the author,
 interrupts a crew shooting a tacky B movie. In keeping with the
 period, the production is in black and white. Less understandable is
 Bryden's decision to go for a letter-box shape by toppling and telling
 the picture. It serves no obvious dramatic purpose and is historically
 inaccurate, since wide screens did not appear until the 1950s. John
 Hurt and the promising Tara Fitzgerald play the father and
 stepdaughter who hold the key to the family's shameful past and
 Brian Cox is the director who tries to put their story on film. The
 acting is strong, if sometimes on the shrill side. (Ceelex) (s)
 (1898388)
 10.40 **Film: La Ronde** (1950, b/w)
 CHOICE: No season of classic French cinema would be
 complete without Max Ophüls's stylish spin on the merry-go-round
 of love. Ophüls was the master of the studio setting and the swirling
 camera and both elements are gloriously in evidence in this tale of
 old Vienna. The film traces with elegance, charm and ironic wit a
 series of liaisons which starts with a prostitute and a soldier and
 ends several affairs later as the story comes full circle. Anton
 Walbrook, himself a citizen of Vienna before making his career in
 Britain, plays the composer and the rest of the cast reads like a roll-
 call of the French cinema: Simone Signoret, Danielle Darrieux,
 Gérard Philipe, Jean-Louis Barrault. But this is as much a director's
 film as an actor's, guided by the charmingly to Arthur Schnitzler's tale
 of stylised cinema (6066388)
 12.15am **Saturday Night Live**. The actor Michael Keaton hosts the last
 in the series of the variety comedy show (s) (9820861). Ends at 12.50

ITV LONDON

- 8.00 **TV-am** (587947)
 9.25 **What's Up Doc?** Andy Crane, Pat Sharp and Yvette Fielding are
 joined by Tyla Tyla who perform their new single "Could it be
 Magic" (s) (3440127)
 11.30 **Monday Movies**. Featuring previews of *Home Alone II*
 and *The Muppet Christmas Carol*, starring Michael Caine as
 Scrooge (7779)
 12.00 **The ITV Chart Show**. This week's Video Vault features the groups
 Fun Boy Three and Bananarama, and the specialist chart is rock (s)
 (86170)
 1.00 **ITN News** with Dermot Mumaghan. **Weather** (11587102) 1.05 **LWT**
News (11586473)
 1.10 **Highways and Holidays**. Jenny Bristol prepares a selection of
 festive food and drink (93557218)
 1.40 **Snooker**. Coverage of the final of the Coaltie World Matchplay
 championship from the Dome in Doncaster (9718833)
 4.10 **Dinosaur**. Prehistoric puppet show. Robbie is attacked by a pack
 of hoodlums (s) (4883152)
 4.40 **ITN News** with Dermot Mumaghan. **Weather** (5554247) 5.00 **LWT**
News (1734021)
 5.05 **Cartoon Time** (r) (2622522)
 5.15 **Beverly Hills**, 90210: Chuckle's Back. Teenage angst with the
 wealthy pupils of a California high school. Steve searches for his
 natural parents. With Ian Ziering, Sherron Doherty and Jason
 Geddis (s) (8594833)
 6.05 **Dani's Norden's Laughing Fish**. Dani Norden presents a
 compilation of the pranks and hoaxes that take place during the
 making of television programmes, films and commercials.
 Featuring Rula Laniak, Burt Reynolds and Nicholas Lyndhurst (r).
 (Oracle) (865589)
 7.05 **Beadle's About**. Jeremy Beadle and team play practical jokes on
 unsuspecting members of the public (215947)



Bereaved: Peter Falk as the dishevelled detective (7.35pm)

- 7.35 **New Columbo: Rest in Peace**. Mrs Columbo. The elusive wife of
 the dishevelled detective is murdered. After attending her funeral,
 Columbo is faced with a death threat. Starring Peter Falk, Helen
 Shaver and Lovejoy's Ian McShane. (Oracle) (8888164)
 9.20 **World Championship Snooker**. Jimmy White introduces live
 coverage of the WSC semi-middleweight championship bout
 between title holder Nigel Barn and Welshman Nicky Floor.
 Commentary by Ray Gutteridge and Jim Watt from London's
 Alexandra Palace (81812)
 10.05 **ITN News** with Dermot Mumaghan. **Weather** (805724) 10.20 **LWT**
Weather (227183)
 10.25 **Richard Dignace** returns with his inimitable brand of humour and
 song. He is joined by guests: Buffy Saint-Marie, Ennio Marchetto
 and the Unknown Comic (r) (78216)
 11.25 **Snooker**. The concluding frames in the final of the Coaltie World
 Matchplay Championship from the Dome in Doncaster (437102)
 1.05am **Almost Grown: Holy Grail**. Norman (Timothy Daly) attends the
 seventeenth birthday party of his father-in-law (314085)
 2.05 **Lisa Stansfield** — All Around the World. Highlights from the
 singer's concert at the Birmingham NEC in 1990, who talks with
 Paul Gambaccini (8773329)
 3.05 **The Big E**. Magazine programme for and about young Europeans
 (s) (772707)
 4.05 **ITN News**. American drama series about a football coach (36597)
 4.30 **BPM**. Entertainment magazine (s) (12228)
 5.30 **ITN Morning News** with Phil Roman (52313). Ends at 6.00

CHANNEL 4

- 6.00 **Heathcliff**. Cartoon adventures (r) (1053522) 6.25 **Eurobeat's**
 Castle. Music and cartoons for the under-fives (r) (594833) 6.55
 Kids: Art. A 13-part guide to life. (Teletext) (s) (193365) 7.25
 Kids: Mountain biking (r) (2481096) 7.55 **Trans World Sport**.
 International sporting news (498102) 8.00 **News summary**
 (4765589) 9.15 **Racing**: The Morning Line (5227588)
 10.00 **Running High**. A profile of the international mountain runner Hugh
 Symonds (r) (44580)
 10.30 **Gazzetta Football** (Italy). Paul Gascoigne takes his weekly look at
 the Italian league (22928)
 11.30 **American Football** with Gary Immlach and Mick Luckhurst (r) (1831)
 12.00 **Sign On: Deal World**. A look at how Sweden's educational
 television is trying to reach the teenage audience. With signing and
 subtitles (70812)
 12.30 **Seorge and Memories**. Aya Falz talks to Zamine Gataraz (20305)
 1.00 **Channel 4 Racing** from Doncaster. Derek Thompson introduces
 the following: 1.10 **Charles Sydney Novice's Hurdle**: 1.45 **Coniston**
Handicap Hurdle: 2.45 **Freshwater Novice's Chase**: 3.15 **Coniston**
Handicap Hurdle: 3.45 **Freshwater Novice's Chase** (1265444)
 3.10 **Film: The Reluctant Debutante** (1958). "Trepidation in which an
 American teenager visits her father and stepmother in London,
 quickly tires of the social whirl and falls for a dance-band drummer.
 Starring the then husband and wife, Rex Harrison and Kay Kendall
 Directed by Vincent Minnelli (22030473)
 4.55 **Closed Mondays**. Claymation (3344857)
 5.05 **Brookside**. Omnibus edition (r). (Teletext) (s) (3874909)
 6.30 **Flight to Reply**. Sheena McDonald chairs a discussion on *Critica*.
 Eye's documentary about whether families need fathers. (Teletext)
 (s) (657)
 7.00 **A Week in Politics**. Vincent Hanna and Andrew Rawnsley talk to
 Bryan Gould, MP, about the changes needed within the Labour
 party; there is a report on Chris Patten's initiatives in Hong Kong,
 and a look at the imposition of VAT on bloodstock sales (3305)
 8.00 **The Big Battalions**. Brian Cox and Jane Lapotnik star in the
 penultimate episode of this topical drama (r). (Teletext) (s) (9725)



Tucking in: Jonathan Ross succumbs to junk food (9.00pm)

- 9.00 **America's Fun**
 CHOICE: The United States, declares Jonathan Ross, has a
 higher percentage of obese citizens than any other nation on earth.
 Under the point with a montage of wobbling bellies and
 bulging backside, Ross goes in search of the great American diet.
 His first stop is an eatery which challenges its customers to
 consume an outsize plateful of beef and potatoes in half an hour.
 Successful candidates get the meal free. They probably also get
 severe indigestion, but Ross is not telling. Then it is on to the shrine
 to Colonel Sanders, the original McDonald's franchisee and the
 lunch bar which claims to have sold the first hamburger. This
 homage to junk food ("never have as many eaten so much so fast"),
 quips Ross) is tongue-in-cheek, enormously entertaining and
 makes you look forward to the rest of the series (s) (9538)
 10.00 **Film: Danton** (1982) starring Gérard Philipe as the idealistic
 Georges Danton, who battles with the manipulative Robespierre
 over the direction of the French Revolution. A thoughtful and
 carefully crafted film from the master Polish director, Andrzej Wajda.
 In French with English subtitles (8606812)
 12.35am **Let the Blood Run Free**. Soap medical soap. Dr Lovelock
 reveals his love for Dorothea (582232)
 1.05 **The Happening**. Joelle Holland and her band are joined by Nick
 Revali, Nine Below Zero, Jay Charnonau, Hettie Hayridge, John
 Maloney and Oleta Adams (s) (5984087)
 2.05 **The Word** (r) (s) (8891771)
 3.05 **Film: The Squeaker** (1937, b/w). Fast-moving Edgar Wallace
 thriller starring Edmund Lowe as an inspector who goes undercover
 to discover the identity of a jewel thief. With Sebastian Shaw and
 Ann Todd. Directed by William K. Howard (184329). Ends at 4.25

SATellite

- SKY ONE**
 6.00am **Danger Bay** (1974) 6.30 **Elphinstone**
 Bay (84102) 7.00 **Fun Factory** (770577)
 12.00 **Barney Jones** (85744) 1.00pm
 Nashville Grob (85747) 4.00 **Catman**
 (60181) 4.00 **The Duke of Hazzard** (7522)
 8.00 **WWF Superstars of Wrestling** (8164)
 8.00 **Kings and Queens** (52529) 7.00 **UK**
 Top 40 (80728) 8.00 **Unlabeled** (85747)
 (85747) 10.00 **Cops** (76034) 8.00 **Cops**
 (57473) 10.00 **Miss World 1992** (6738)
 12.00 **Pages from Style**
SKY NEWS
 Twenty-four hour news service
SKY MOVIES+
 6.00 **Showcase** (49812)
 6.00 **Acne High** (1978). Story of fighter pilots
 during the first world war (50752)

EUROSPORT

- 5.00pm **Sport Aerobics** (70477) 8.30 **St**
Report (6903) 9.30 **50 Jumping** (2018)
 10.30 **Ship Aerobics** (59454) 1.00 **Boxing**
 (8538) 12.30 **Tennis** (557744) 1.50 **Artistic**
Gymnastics (557744) 2.00 **Swimming**
 World Cup (5522) 2.30 **Figure Skating** (60639)
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SUNDAY TELEVISION AND RADIO

CHANNEL 4

- 6.00 **Trans World Sport** (r) (2/04/07) 7.00 **Take Five** for younger viewers (r) (2/27/04) 7.25 **Laural and Hardy** (r) (7/6/04) 7.51 **Little Wizards**, Magical cartoon (9/04/04) 8.00 **Sandelson**, Episodes of a pirate prince (3/3/05) 8.30 **Wish Kid**, Cartoon fun (12/12/06) 8.53 **Trans World Sports**, Episodes of Hergé's classic series (2/11/05) 9.25 **Laural and Hardy** (5/3/03) 9.30 **Dennis**, Cartoon antics of the mischievous boy and his friends (r) (8/9/04) 9.45 **Flipper**, Adventures of a friendly dolphin (04/04/35)
- 10.15 **The Lone Ranger** (p/w) Vintage adventures of the masked hero as his Indian sidekick Tonto and Silver his horse. Starring Clayton Moore (8/6/416)
- 10.45 **Voyage to the Bottom of the Sea**, Tales of an extraordinary submarine and her crew (3/1/48) 11.45 **Little House on the Prairie**, A young boy offers to become the Ingalls' slave in return for an education (2/19/74)
- 12.40 **Leonardo da Vinci**, Artistic animation (11/4/84/040)
- 12.45 **The Perfect Fit**, Women's obsession with dieting (7/23/07)
- 1.15 **Football Italia**, Lazio v Inter Milan (1/5/06/941)
- 3.00 **Film: The Black Swan** (1942), Handsome swashbuckler starring Tyrone Power as a buccanier who sets out to bring gold-blooded pirate George Sanders to justice. Maureen O'Hara provides the romantic interest. Directed by Henry King (8/3/90)
- 5.05 **Shakespeare**, A dramatic version of Shakespeare's *A Midsummer Night's Dream* (2/3/35/96)
- 5.10 **News** and weather (9/34/95)
- 5.15 **High Interest: Saving the American Dream**, Living standards in the United States have fallen dramatically over the past decade. President-elect Bill Clinton's new administration proposes a new industrial policy to reinvigorate American industry (10/2/95)
- 6.00 **The Mincey**, A Meliopoulos fantasy series (2/26)
- 6.30 **The Cosby Show**, In the second part of a story, The (Malcolm) James Warner realizes that a rebellious boy in his care has dyslexia (Teletext) (7/06)
- 7.00 **Explosion: The Elements**, In a virtuoso performance, the poet Robert Bly vividly illustrates the discovery of the chemical elements from solid to liquid and from base metal to gold (r). (Teletext) (6/47)



In the dark: John Mortimer finds the evil in poetry (8.00pm)

8.00 **Poetry in Motion: Vice and Villainy** John Mortimer presents a selection of poems portraying the darker side of human nature, including Milton's *Lucifer* and Shelley's "Satanstoe," Alfred Noyes's "Highwayman," "Murderer in Reading Gali" by Oscar Wilde and "Brilliant Spy" by Gavin Ewart. (Textext) (1139)

8.00 **American Football.** Mick Luckhurst and Gary Imlach introduce highlights of the match between the Minnesota Vikings and the San Francisco 49ers [89706]

10.00 **Film: Dancer Within** (1980, b/w). Second world war heroics starring Richard Attenborough and Richard Todd. Plans for a daring escape by British prisoners from an Italian POW camp are foisted by an American POW, the American POW Officer (10788)

11.50 **After the Gulf.** Six short films by Arab directors reflecting on the Gulf war against Iraq, its aftermath and implications. With English subtitles (U) (824752) Ends at 1.10am

(B722400) 2.30-3.0

[illegible]

**BLAND
HUSBAND
WEDS
TOFU.**

B	S	U	H
A	L	E	S
T	N	D	W
Y	O	F	U

All these words and more are in the puzzle above. That's Boggle, the fast fun game where you've got three minutes to find as many words as possible. Letters must adjoin both not necessarily in a straight line. Simple eh? Get Boggling.

EVER BEEN BOGGLED?

Boggle

THE 3 MINUTE WORD GAME

The long and the short of it

Nigella Lawson, one of 18 million viewers who tuned into *A Touch of Frost*, on the super-length detective series



TELEVISION has learnt a few tricks from airport fiction. It would be unfair to say that the rule applied is never mind the quality, feel the width, but just as no serious shock novelist would think of delivering a manuscript less than 500 pages long, so producers of television thrillers now consider that they are not serving the genre if they come up with anything less than a good, evening-consuming two hours.

Not so long ago, the latest David Jason vehicle, *A Touch of Frost*, which lasted from dinner to bedtime on Sunday, would have been more likely to materialise as a series of six or so at 25 minutes a time. But perhaps the impetus to confute what remains a standard tellyish police detective yarn into three "feature-length" programmes stems from something more technically related: the video.

Television viewing figures have indeed been boosted by the recession, but so has video hire. And people have got into the habit of settling down in front of the television, prepared for something more than merely quick-fire entertainment. Apart from anything else, it's just easier knowing that what you choose to watch of an evening will keep you occupied for the night. When *Morse* first launched the two-hour segment, no one thought it would work, but as it turned out, the length was not so much a barrier to popularity but an inducement to watch: ideal programming for lazy people; even the remote-controlling finger can take an evening off.

It's not just in terms of its length that *A Touch of Frost* follows the *Morse* code: elements of character were undeniably there, too. John Thaw's *Morse* is a tetchy, difficult character, at odds with the system,

TV REVIEW

prone to moroseness and definitely not a corporate man, rather the detective as misfit. Ditto with David Jason's "Jack" Frost. A crumpled figure with sad spaniel eyes and a world-weary manner, Frost is on a collision course with the rest of the force, showing an anarchic disdain for paperwork and office hierarchies and imbued with a certain seedy dignity.

This being the first in the series (one down, two to go in the present run, and since figures just out show it — or rather David Jason — to have pulled in 18 million viewers, there is of course another series planned for next year), a deal of heavy-handed scene-setting was inevitable. We were reminded a bit too often of the private tragedy behind the grizzly exterior, with mournful scenes at the bedside of Frost's wife, in the last stages of terminal cancer, and pathetic reminders of Frost's dismal, loveless past. Much span along predictably. When a young, blond, well-spoken copper with a peaches and cream complexion and by-the-book earnestness (and a nephew of the chief constable, to boot) comes on to the scene, he, as you would expect, is speedily entrusted to Frost's care.

Where would police drama be, on either side of the Atlantic, without the timeworn device of the incompatible partner routine? But here the device is thankfully merely employed rather than milked, and the two go from mutual mistrust to grudging respect, the familiar trajectory, without too much ado.

In the old days, the formula was simple: plot and subplot, for sharp-eyed aficionados. Now, the trick is to present two complete storylines with the real detective work needed on the part of the viewers, who try to work out how they can ultimately be connected. Moral certainties,

too, went out with Jack Hawkins, and the crimes investigated — a missing child, the discovery of a long-buried corpse — involve a whole network of socially concerned "ishoes".

Like *Morse*, Frost's sympathy lies more with those he investigates than with the official investigators. It's their stories, not their solutions that provide the drama's thrust. Linda is a single mother, whose isolation and poverty forces her into part-time prostitution; when her daughter goes missing, Frost is quick to sympathise, slow to judge, perhaps rather too pointedly so.

Similarly, when the hunt for the missing girl turns up, instead, a skeleton with an empty iron box padlocked to its wrist, another story of quiet despair and domestic tragedy is revealed. The retired bank manager's desperation led him to kill and steal — for love, for respectability, you understand; as, long ago, Frost, swathed in comparable depression, committed an apathetic unthinking act which was construed as bravery and won the George Cross for it. Irony, don't you know? Funny old world, as Baroness Thatcher once said.

It dawned on me, while watching this, that the real success of police dramas lies in the fact that they are a successful male appropriation of the notionally female domain of the soap opera. In soaps the dominant characters are women, in police thrillers men, but the ground they cover, especially now in the age of the human interest storylines, is the same: discontent, unhappiness, domestic strife and relationships, mostly failed. Only safely contained within the virtue institution of the police force can the central figure unashamedly emerge as self-deprecatingly male, vulnerable, an anti-hero, but heroic nonetheless. This is David Jason's first



The case of the misfit detective and the disgusting drunk: David Jason as "Jack" Frost, and Alan Bates as playwright Hamish Partt

straight part for 20 years and although I couldn't say he fails to convince, he doesn't entirely manage his funny self. His timing, his fumble-fisted hand movements, his ironic deliveries only just mask the Del Boy beneath. In the end, this doesn't matter: his unprepossessing, squat form still manages to fill the screen, and his doleful eyes, their sad emptiness, savagely quell the desire to laugh.

Simon Gray's *Unnatural Pursuits*, which could perhaps more profitably have been given the feature-treatment, was served up instead over two nights, at an hour and a half at the first sitting and an hour the next. Its billing, as a "comic fantasy", was accurate-ish. It's funny, but when you laugh at

Alan Bates as the hopelessly shambolic, walking disaster of a playwright, Hamish Partt, you laugh up your heart. The fantasy part was unfortunately all too correct. Briefly — and I'd rather get the one thing I didn't like over and done with quickly — the Dennis Potterish singing-and-dancing episodes which swung into action at times of maximum alcoholic confusion for Partt interrupt the narrative like so much embarrassing giggling. It's not the music that's bad. In fact, Robert Lockhart's actual score was consistently good and hilariously right, but the device jars. It's overkill for the sake of the piece: the simple pleasure of having good words well acted is foregone.

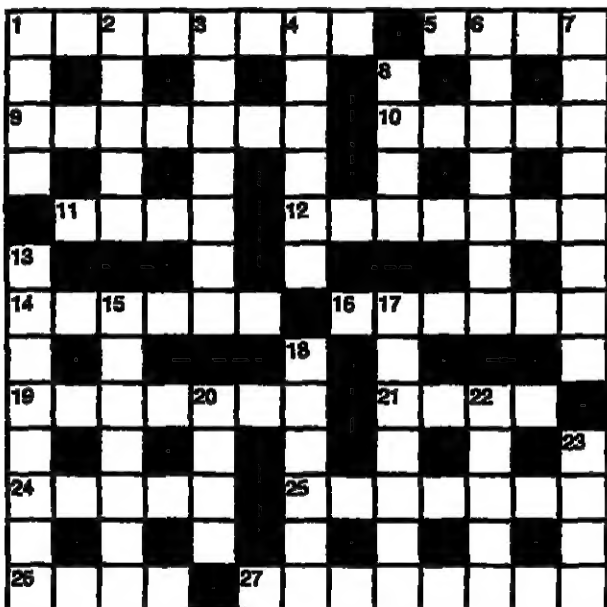
Alan Bates — who should get his actorly knighthood soon — grasps the part with a vengeance. Just looking at him on screen, chewing his nicotine chewing gum, with a bag in one hand and a bottle of booze in the other, you can tell his breath smells, the air in his hotel room is acrid and stale and his underpants are stained. He reeks of depression. This is the anti-hero in epic guise: offending directors, upsetting actors and begging for his paranoid fears to be fulfilled. They are, of course.

This is a lesson in disgust, and self-disgust, which reveals itself in a series of set-pieces. Our anti-hero in Hammersmith, squaring with a bottle of Glenfiddich in a theatre lavatory after his first night while

he hears England's Greatest Living Playwright telling his fellow at the urinal what's wrong with the play. In sunny innocent Los Angeles, sitting in at rehearsals where the director tells the actors about flexing the "life muscle", and they accuse Partt of turning them into passive smokers — "and passive drinkers, too". In Dallas, where he accepts the keys to the city and offends the citizens by alluding to the "Lee Harvey Oswald Memorial Hospital".

And to all those who get irritated by the "Thank you for not smoking" sign in taxis, I commend Gray's rebuttal. "It's all right," says Partt, lighting up to the cabbie's muttering disgust, "I am smoking, so you don't have to thank me."

CONCISE CROSSWORD NO 2969



ACROSS

- 1 Chorus line leg lift (4,4)
- 5 Deer tail (4)
- 9 Fragrant scent (7)
- 10 Seize territory (5)
- 11 Sudden pull (4)
- 12 Oxford academic dress (7)
- 14 Bully off game (6)
- 16 Tank tower (6)
- 19 Embroidery frame (7)
- 21 Lip greeting (4)
- 24 Smell (5)
- 25 Floor exercise athlete (7)
- 26 Love excessively (4)
- 27 Throw off (8)

DOWN

- 2 Wish (4)
- 3 Furze (5)
- 4 Finger joint (7)
- 6 Fold line (6)
- 7 Defeat (7)
- 8 Poison strength (8)
- 13 Lerwick area (8)
- 15 Soothe (7)
- 17 Untidy (7)
- 18 Czech capital (6)
- 20 By mouth (4)
- 22 Top shoe covers (5)
- 23 Knock out (4)

SOLUTIONS TO NO 2968

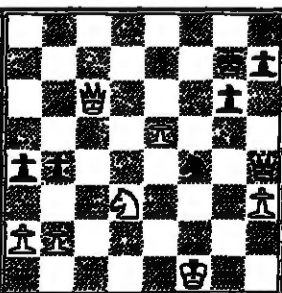
- ACROSS: 1 Rapidity 7 Usual 8 Morrisman 9 Low 10 Lure 11 Sleazy 13 Dry run 14 Beauty 19 Set out 20 Will 21 Caw 23 Conscious 24 Rifle 25 Platonic
- DOWN: 1 Rumbled 2 Portray 3 Drip 4 Tumult 5 Bully 6 Clown 7 Unravel 12 Justice 15 Unicorn 16 Yolk sac 17 Tunnel 18 Scarf 19 Swift 22 Scot

WINNING MOVE

By RAYMOND KEENE, Chess Correspondent

This position is from the game Farago — Conquest, Foreign & Colonial Hastings Masters 1990. In this position, both kings are exposed and under attack. However, it is white's turn to move, and this is the decisive factor. Can you see how he finishes off?

This year's Hastings tournament features the Hungarian prodigy Judit Polgar. Further details from the British Chess Federation on 0424 442500. Send your answer on a postcard with your name and address to: *The Times*, 1 Pennington Street, London E1 9XN. The first three correct answers drawn on Thursday next week will win a Batsford chess book. The



answer and the winners will be printed in *The Times* on the following Saturday. Solution to last Saturday's competition: 1...Rh1+. The winners are: B. Conway, Manchester; H. McDonald, Birkenhead; R.A. England, London.

WORD-WATCHING

By PHILIP HOWARD

DOUKHOBOR
a. A type of dog
b. A Russian sectarian
c. A wood stove

BARBONE
a. A cattle disease
b. The upper femur
c. A tortoise-shell lute

Answers on page 2

FLEDGWITE
a. Fledged, ready to fly
b. A term of Anglo-Saxon law
c. A whipper-snapper

GREYHOUND
a. A greyhound
b. A greedy-guts
c. A wicked warlock

A bouquet for Pirandello's B-movie

● Performance: Six Characters in Search of an Author

(Saturday, 9.05pm, BBC2)

This is such a stale stalwart of student drama productions that ordinarily it can be difficult to muster much enthusiasm for Pirandello's set-piece (*Nigella Lawson* writes). Set in the context of the current, extraordinarily fine *Performance* series, however, interest is revived. Bill Bryden directs, and takes the play (newly adapted by Michael Hastings) out from its familiar setting — a theatre in Italy in the 1920s — and places it in an English film studio of the 1940s, where a typical B-movie of the period is being shot. Simon Curtis, the series producer, who should have rose petals strewn in his path for more in gratitude and honour, has assembled a fine cast, led by John Hurt, Brian Cox and Tara Fitzgerald. Shot in black and white.

TV PREVIEW

● Americana

(Saturday, 9pm, Channel 4)

Jonathan Ross has rather cleverly made kitsch his very own kingdom. In this new three-part series, he makes a royal progress through America, focussing on its eccentricities and excesses. This first documentary investigates food, taking in a woman who does her cooking in her dishwasher, Big Mac and Kentucky Fried Chicken museums, and a roadside bar with naked waitresses.

● Funny Business

(Sunday, 8.05pm, BBC2)

The anatomy of the comic arts continues with a behind-the-scenes look at the funniest woman on television, Roseanne Arnold, "the accident", as she's been

called, "that keeps on happening". Quite why Roseanne allowed these cameras backstage is hard to imagine since she is famously intolerant of criticism, so it will certainly make for fascinating viewing.

Without Walls: *Après le Déluge*

(Tuesday, 9pm, Channel 4)

Melvin Bragg dons metaphorical beret for this voyage back in time through post-war Paris, as he promenades around the city, visiting the bars and cafes of the Left Bank to paint a wistfully redolent picture of "the second and last great flowering of European modernism". The documentary quotes from writings of the period — by De Beauvoir, Sartre, Robbe-Grillet and Genet — and conducts interviews with, among others, the journalist Olivier Todd and the writer and American in Paris, Edmund White. As the Michelin guide might say: *vaut le détour*.

Watch your step on Pavement

Caitlin Moran lends an ear to music to heal the mind or mince the brain cells



TALKING about yourself is very dull and presumptuous, so I'll write about what Pavement's debut album



Luscious slobos from America: Pavement "work real hard every day at being cool"

Slanted and Enchanted (Big Cat Records, all formats) did to my friend Lotesi. From an early age she had adored the plastic waxings of cheap pop singles by bands weighed down with too many teeth and too much hairage, so I despaired of her ever screwing up enough to need music in her life, rather than just having it there for the hell of it. She had the radio on all the time but never actually listened to it.

Then life snarled her up a little, as it does, and Lotesi wanted songs that were the same shape and colour as her moods. She didn't want soul music — it would've been too painful to send any messages to that part of the body. Nah. Lotesi wanted head music: the sort of stuff that would fizzle through her synapses and leave them blasted for days.

Pavement make head music; she got the album and felt better. Each song rolls along pop's glittering conveyor belt, lovingly stuck all over with bits of toffee and glazed fruits and great gobstoppers of tune. "Perfume V" is fuzzy and beautiful. "Loretta's Scars" has utterly impenetrable lyrics. In fact, all Pavement's songs are beautiful and fuzzy with

impenetrable lyrics. If, for a joke, you put The Fall and Nirvana in a blender, what might come out when you'd finished would be either a bowl full of disgusting things, eager to sue you for the rest of your life, or Pavement.

Various members of the band are sprawled across the bear-up sofas, each talking through the hazy, personal hell-fog of a family-sized hang-over. Guitarist and songwriter Steve Malkmus, who has the kind of eyes that Walt Disney would've inevitably endow his baby woodland creatures with, is holding forth about Pavement in drawly, chewed-up American vowels and occasional gasps of cigarette smoke, which float free and stink up the curtains.

"We are luscious slobos," he says, gesturing to Bob, the band's second drummer, and Spiral Stairs, Mark Ibold and lead drummer Gary. Gary lends the unpredictable air to Pavement — at gigs he variously hands out celery and cinnamon toast, stands on his head, swings from the lighting rig, and, at the Reading Festival, smeared his torso

with mud to show solidarity with the bedraggled crowd. Gary is 20 years older than the rest of the band, and thinks Yes were the greatest thing that ever happened to the music world.

"Gary drinks an unfortunately large amount of vodka," Malkmus says, which possibly explains the whole Yes thing.

GUILTY SECRETS: MAURICE GRAN



"MY GUILTY secrets are that I channel-hop and I love watching rubbish on cable. Again and again I'm drawn to the hour-long commercial segment on Lifestyle. My favourite ad is for this wonderful machine that turns anything — carrots, shoes, furniture — into a nutritious drink. I have also been watching UK Gold, which is great for seeing how crappy your old favourites really were."



TB, measles, polio, whooping cough, tetanus or diphtheria could strike Musa down tomorrow.

Your £3 will immunise him for life.

Three pounds. That's all it costs to immunise a child like little Musa against TB, measles, polio, whooping cough, tetanus and diphtheria.

Yet every moment he's left unprotected he's in danger of becoming one of the twelve children who are disabled, blinded or killed by these diseases every minute.

Save the Children has a chance to get to those children first — but not without your help.

Our programmes of medical care and health education help prevent children's needless deaths both at home and abroad.

A £15 donation from you can help safeguard the lives of five children.

Please fill out this coupon — and help protect a child from disease for life. Thank you.

Save the Children Fund, FREEPOST, London SE5 8BR.

Yes I want to help keep a child free from disease for life. Please accept my gift of:

☐ £30 ☐ £15 ☐ £10 Other £

Name Mr/Mrs/Ms: (BLOCK CAPITALS PLEASE)

Address:

Postcode:

I enclose my: ☐ Cash ☐ Postal Order ☐ Cheque ☐ Giro No. 5173/WH

Or charge my: ☐ Access ☐ Visa ☐ Diners Club ☐ American Express ☐

Account No.

Signature: (Credit cards only) Card Expiry Date

Save the Children